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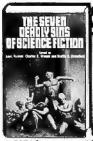

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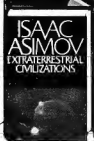

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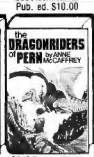

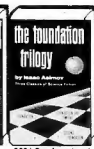

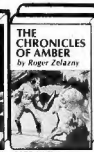

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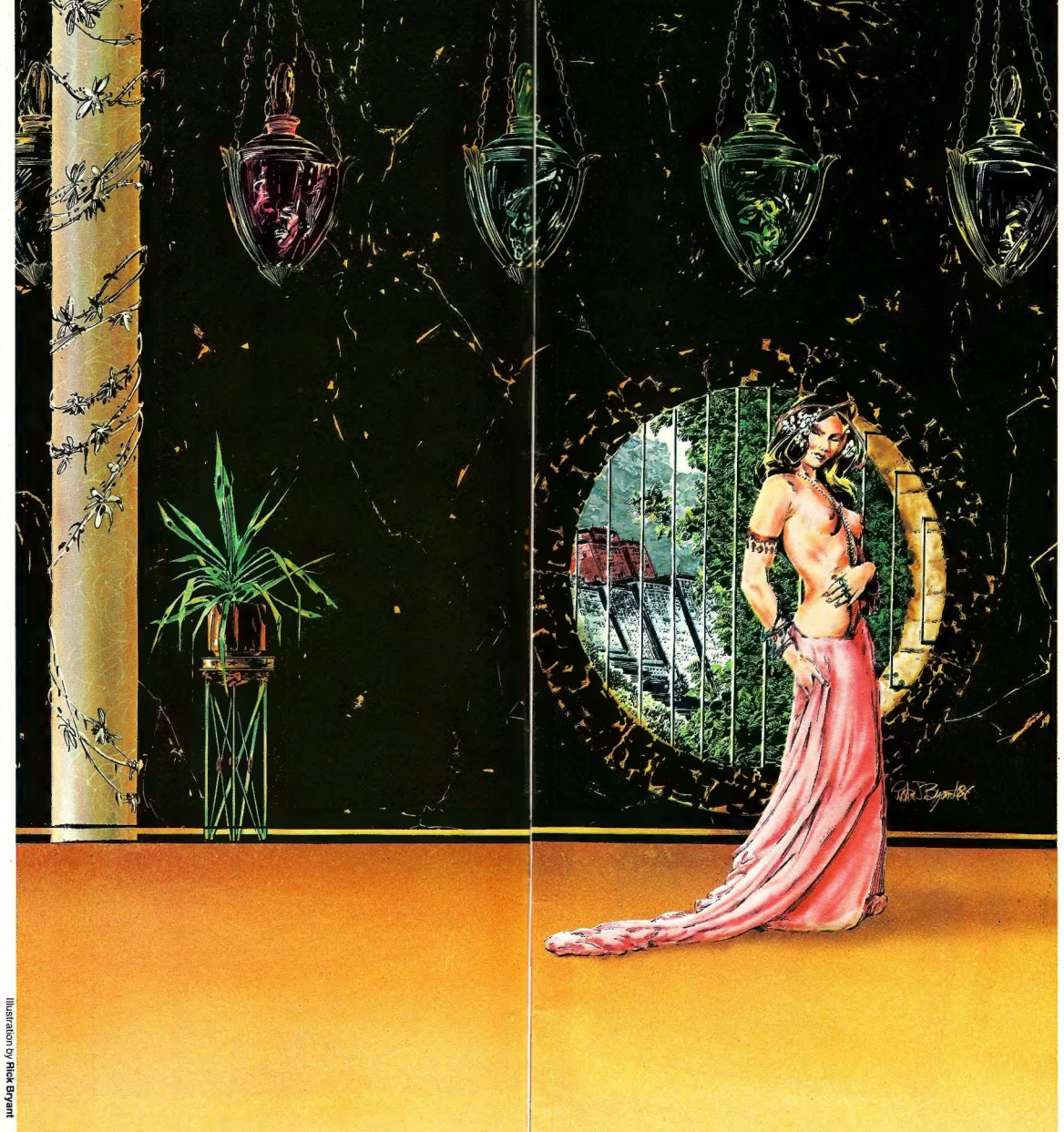

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Q: What do you think of people who say, "This guy Richard Corben has just got to be perverse!"?

A: They're full of shit!

THE RICHARD CORBEN INTERVIEW

by Brad Balfour

Photograph by Brad Balfour

The story is classic: quiet introvert creates wondrous worlds of heroism and powerful fantasy. At least, that's how the facts read on the surface, like something out of Robert E. Howard's history or the biography of that repressed Victorian H.P. Lovecraft. The archetypal myth of the fantasist (exemplified as well in the lives of Aubrey Beardsley, Edgar Allan Poe, and to a lesser degree, Edgar Rice Burroughs) as the unactualized adventurer resides also in Richard Corben's history. But his evolution, from spending an isolated rural childhood to being a numbingly quiet persona as an animator at Calvin Studios in Kansas City, Missouri, contains the kernel of something other than mere repetition of the myths. Maybe it was a matter of the sixties pop-culture explosion or McLuhan's cool media methodology or Andy Warhol's prescient "In the future everybody will be famous for fifteen minutes"; but Richard Corben wasn't meant to wallow in cultdom or rest within the cocoon of comfortable obscurity. Nor is Corben doomed to the niche of the mediocre lightweight (as was E. R. Burroughs). Already a visual superstar internationally—and something of a mystery man by virtue of his silence—Corben stands to step further into the limelight through the animated power of the Heavy Metal *movie and its version of Corben's quintessentially heroic tale* Den. *What has really removed Corben from the vale of mediocrity is a sense of irony. For Corben, crafting the Platonic ideal of hero seemed out of place with the era of his growing up (he was born in 1940)—the post-Hiroshima age. No simple heroic buffoon made of tendon and raw muscle completes the Corben story; the Corben hero's magnificent musculature is born of a love of the grotesque. And Corben's lush, almost blindingly bright color sense seems to originate in psychedelia, though he has steadfastly maintained a nearly drug-free history. Even his own reality of being a husband, family man, and householder in a Kansas City suburb—all of it a cloak of conventionality—seems almost a self-conscious construct, so that he avoids drifting down the chasm of the modern comic-book-creator myth. Now, at forty, he grows further away from ever being trapped within the person of the mousy man obsessed by his own heroic creations; through a body-building bench press and his own ambition for further creative outlets Corben continues to grow. Even if he dwells within, or rather, somewhere between, his mythos and his realities, then he's now willingly open about it.*

—B. B.

BB: In all the artists I've met, there's this driven quality—a strong obsessiveness. I see that in you; what's the source of that obsession?

RC: I know I'm obsessed, but I don't know what the root of it is.

BB: I think it was Jean-Pierre Dionnet who said in *Zoom* magazine that you were obsessed by sex, death, and violence.

RC: All humanity is.

BB: I guess. But you confront it more directly than a lot of humanity does.

RC: I'd say with average people it's on their mind, but it's hidden way back. They don't want to think about it. I try and come to terms with it in some way that is not quite so horrible as it could be, or in some way that offers resolution, I would say, in a good way.

BB: Why do you think Richard Corben is so blessed with this power to illuminate, or with something that just sets you off from others and makes you seek judgment directly?

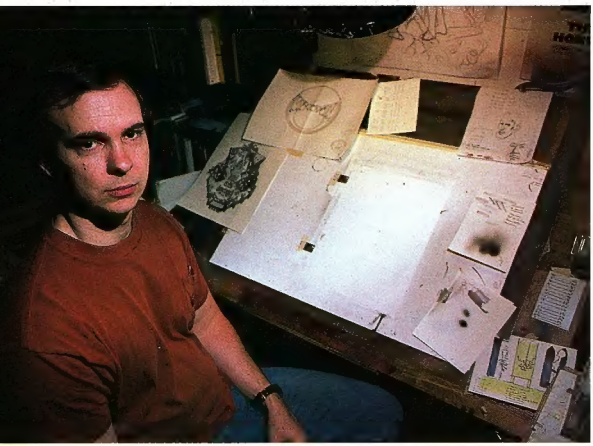
RC: Well, maybe God touched me (that's a joke).

BB: Okay . . . *why* do you think people are attracted to your work?

RC: I believe it's the characterizations. I make strong characters and I'm good with figure drawing too. Even though some people

think I exaggerate figures *and* characters both, that's part of my style. They see it first as a realistic drawing. Then when they see the exaggerations they don't like it anymore. That's the point of the drawing, the emphasis that I make.

If you see a person with a long nose, I'll draw him with a slightly longer nose, to emphasize it. If a hero is muscular, I'll make him more muscular. I emphasize things that attract me, or the essence of them. I see things vividly and that's the way I make them. In literature, people may get different images from reading the same story, but in a comic story, it's concrete—that's the way it is.



BB: Why do you think people are attracted to comics?

RC: It's a narrative form, but it's much easier to read than literature. It's simple, so it takes less effort; you're relying on someone else's vision, so you have to do less work to get through it.

BB: That sounds terrible! But the effect of your work is something more than just that: like that of a superrealist painter it's so real, it reveals something else, much more than obvious reality. Is it stuff from the inner psyche—things you're attracted to, maybe? —hidden homosexual or S&M tendencies?

RC: I'm not worried about them.

BB: What do you think of people who say, "This guy Richard Corben has just got to be real perverse!"?

RC: They're full of shit!

BB: Look at the way you exaggerate the male figure. Don't you think there's a sort of subtle homosexual implication in that?

RC: I just emphasize the primary sexual characteristics, and the same thing with the women.

BB: So now people would say, "This guy has to be awfully perverse. He always draws these women with huge, enormous breasts!" Why do you do that?

RC: To differentiate them from the men, of course.

BB: Are you fascinated by big breasts? I really want to know for sure.

RC: I was, at a time, and now it's just another aspect of a stereotype.

BB: When you were a kid, did you masturbate over big breasts?

RC: I wasn't interested in *Playboy* or *Oui*.

BB: Do you think your work is erotic?

RC: Sometimes—maybe sensual.

BB: Would you want to do some work that is purely sensual?

RC: Someday, in the future.

BB: What do you think of somebody masturbating over your work? Do you think that's a possibility?

RC: What they do by themselves is their business.

BB: I bet you've never been asked that question.

RC: No!

BB: I met your wife. She looks like a nice lady, typical human being. She doesn't have huge breasts. What does that reveal about your psychosexual interests?

RC: I don't know.

BB: So why are you so obsessed with sex?

RC: Because it was repressed in me somehow, I guess.

BB: So what insidious feelings are pent up in there?

RC: I'm a sex maniac.

BB: Oh, yeah? Let's hear about this!

RC: Well, never mind! That's much too involved for now.

BB: It's a curious thing to be a sex maniac as you have described yourself and to have been married for so long.

RC: Obviously I'm talking only on the fantasy level; it's the impetus for the force in my work, but it's all mental, not real. Otherwise it would cause me to be self-pitying.

BB: So, in reality, you don't want to be a sex maniac—or haven't been.

RC: I just want to be a stud! That's one of the sources of my popularity, because I believe that all young men and teenagers feel their goal is to be a stud, and that's sort of visualized for them.

BB: Do you feel you're a teenager at heart?

RC: Yes. Constantly—always youth! I want to be a youth forever and then die! Once you pass your maturity or you've reached the point where you're fully grown, fully formed, and fully a person, you're on a downhill slide. Physically, things seem to fall apart. Even in the thirties things start slowing down; you're not as agile, not as fast, not able to learn as quickly. That's something you can find out only when you reach that point. You can tell people that, but they don't believe it until it happens. And then you find out only by pushing yourself after you're mature.

BB: Do you think your work is adolescent?

RC: There's a level of it that is, I believe.

BB: All of your male characters, no matter how old they are in body, have young faces like you.

RC: Yes. The main characters usually are youthful. As my idols change, as I grow older, perhaps the people I draw will start to change too. We're all constantly changing, and this inevitably shows in the work. I'm not exactly sure in what ways, though the new Den probably reflects it.

BB: In some ways the original Den and Kath weren't real, separate characters but were fantasy embodiments of Den/Corben—one seemed the male dream ideal and the other, the desired fantasy ideal. Before, Bloodstar seemed the most realistic of all your characters. Now are the characters more three-dimensional?

RC: When they were created they were pretty artificially done. They were growing in my mind, and it's reflected in the way the stories are going. They are becoming more rounded. I would say at a certain point it was Bloodstar. But I believe Den has developed to where he is more real. I'll give you a clue. Den and Kath split. Whenever in a series a main character falls in love and gets married, they have to kill the woman off or something. In this case, Kath doesn't get killed, she just gets bored.

BB: So Den turns out to be boring.

RC: You see, they have different outlooks on life.

BB: Do you think it reflects a changing Richard Corben?

RC: Probably.

BB: I think you've been able to grow because your marriage stabilized your sexual energy so that it could be redirected into work.

RC: If I weren't married, I would probably be a hermit.

BB: I guess finding Donna was in some ways a big help.

RC: The thing about youth is even though they are desperate, there's always hope!

BB: How old were you when you met Donna?

RC: I was a teenager, probably about seventeen, I imagine.

BB: Was she your first girl friend?

RC: I would say she was my first serious girl friend. I had gone out on a few dates but nothing ever came of it.

BB: How old were you when you got married?

RC: I got married when I was around twenty-two or twenty-three. That means we've been married about seventeen years. (That can't be right!) Donna was still a child when we were married—in her personality. The major stress factors in our marriage occurred because of her growing up and becoming adult. Her goals changed drastically. She wanted to be just a servant at first. She has had to push herself out to be a real person. She has a chip on her shoulder from being repressed.

BB: So, as she developed her independence, getting a job outside the house, leading a life separate from yours, did she resent the female images in your work? How has she reacted to them?

RC: I believe there was a period when she resented the images in my work. She doesn't now. I think she finally has enough self-confidence that they're not threatening.

BB: Doesn't she worry that you'll run around trying to pick up women that look like that?

RC: No, she knows me well enough to know that I don't really desire these women. It's just the way I draw.

BB: So it's a stable marriage. What accounts for that?

RC: Our determination to make it work, I guess. Even though I am sure there were times neither of us thought we were meant for each other, or we lost our romantic notions, we continued on because we felt we had to for our best sake and for a certain length of time as well. And there are other times when it's not bad anyway. I feel a marriage can't last on romantic love, because human personalities are just too volatile. There has to be a sense of responsibility that holds things together.

BB: Do you ever find a conflict between your fantasies and your life's realities?

RC: I did at a certain time, until I met with more people and expanded the number of people I knew. I think women are all alike, no matter what they look like.

BB: What do you think of people accusing you of being sexist?

RC: I don't care. So I am!

BB: You feel you are?

RC: What is their definition of a sexist?

BB: Well, your females seem to be stereotypes of female archetypes, both physically and as characters. They're either beautiful, voluptuous sex objects or evil bitches.

RC: That's right, they are. They are, on first appearance. After you read the thing, then the subtleties come through. It works on many levels, broadly, though it may not be so successful on more esoteric levels.

BB: Well, if a symbolism is there, you don't try to be particularly subtle about it.

RC: When I use a symbol, I do it on purpose and it's not subconscious. The audience doesn't miss it either; it's obvious. If I make a creature with a very long neck, which could be slightly phallic, when I draw it it's *very* phallic.

BB: What do you find are your favorite symbols?

RC: The circle, the moon, women, and the lion. The circle and moon are both female. The lion is a personal symbol—savage, fierce, usually male, and special to me because my name is Richard, like the Lionhearted, so my animal is supposed to be the lion.

Women who proclaim that men and women are the same are stupid. There is a basic difference between men and women. There's no way you can get around it; there never will be! Creating a society without the difference is completely artificial and is doomed.

BB: Do you think you're conscious of creating certain sex symbols?

RC: No, because I usually work in a medium with implied continuity, wherein one image is not always before the viewer.

BB: What do you think of certain sex symbols?

RC: They're women and they're people, but when they're up on a poster, that has no meaning to me.

BB: Do you ever regret you don't have more contact with women like your characters?

RC: No, because once you get to know them, they can be just as dumb as ugly ones. I think women who condemn my work because it's sexist haven't even read it. They just look at the pictures and say, "That's sexist." Women who proclaim that men and women are the same are stupid. There is a basic difference between men and women. There's no way you can get around it; there never will be! Creating a society without the difference is completely artificial and is doomed.

BB: Are your women strictly sex kittens and your men just big, macho heroes? Or do you feel they are more?

RC: They are to some people, and they are on certain levels. Character is just one small aspect of doing the art. There are many aspects: composition, direction, textures, proportions, and emphasizing characteristics are probably more important to me than to other cartoonists. And, if you see large breasts, you can tell from a great distance if it's a man or a woman.

BB: Do you think that's a problem nowadays?

RC: No, but it's the basis of an emphasis! Like I said earlier, if there is a difference in characters, then I am going to emphasize that difference to the point of absurdity.

BB: Why are some of your women hairless in the crotch?

RC: Because I like drawing the forms, and hair destroys form. A form without hair is simpler and slightly bizarre, too.

BB: What do you like about the grotesque?

RC: I believe that is something basic in humans. They like anything different that holds their interest. The more different and bizarre, the more interesting it is.

BB: But look how much people like to conform to society!

RC: They don't want to be weird themselves: they want to look at other people who are weird.

BB: Do you ever want to be endowed as your characters are or be somehow like them?

RC: No, because it's in the role of a drawing, and there is no balance to a drawing, but there is balance to people. For a real person to be like a character in a drawing would be monstrous: not just in the physique, but in the face or anything if it was actually rendered into flesh and bone. It's not real—at least the way I draw it. When I emphasize certain characteristics it's not because I'm following a style or in reaction to a style, it's because I feel it's an emphasis for this particular detail. My idea is to have the fantasy completely realized so that it becomes realistic or so that it would seem real.

BB: By realizing fantasies as completely as you can in this way, you deal with them. You don't need to seek every big-breasted woman in the world. You can, like other red-blooded American males, talk of "hot chicks" but not expect to fuck them.

RC: I know that women are more than just to fuck. That's what they rebel against, being objects, and that's why I feel that in the long run, you're just kidding yourself if you use them only that way.

BB: Do you feel your work is cathartic, then?

RC: That word reminds me of an attack an underground cartoonist made against me once. He claimed he was making an attack against me and any other cartoonist who worked in horror and fantasy and science fiction. He claimed funny comics are cathartic; I claimed horror comics and fantasy comics are cathartic.

BB: Your art seems to be an opportunity for you to express repressed tendencies. What do you figure they are? Violent ones, angry . . .

RC: That's probably part of it . . . frustration.

BB: Frustration about what?

RC: I never became the way I really wanted to be. In growing up, I never felt adequate. And then, growing up, I felt it to be very difficult to be a man, and I didn't know how to be a man. And I guess it was like a search to be a man.

BB: If you don't fit a standard role in this world, especially if you had when you were growing up a macho ideal or some sort of confidence, then you either were thought of as a homosexual or a weirdo, and if you weren't a homosexual, you didn't know what place to fit in . . .

RC: It's like being a hermit.

BB: Did you feel like hiding away?

RC: I did hide.

BB: What other ways?

RC: I'd say repressed emotions. People would probably find me cold and calculating even though I was not, really.

BB: Do you feel that you express yourself now more than you ever have?

RC: In my artwork, yes.

BB: How about verbally?

RC: When I worked at Calvin, they wanted me to give a workshop speech one year. I took it as a challenge and I did it. But that was probably the worst period of my life, preparing for that speech where I had to get up in front of about eight or nine hundred people and make a speech, and that's something I don't care to repeat. It's still difficult.

BB: Why is it so difficult for you? Why do you think you had to turn to comics to express yourself, and specifically to comics and animation?

RC: This is something that happens at a very early age—a disposition for emphasizing one side of the personality. I had a very hard time as a youngster learning verbal communication, and feel it probably spurred me on to the visual. That's the only explanation I could find for it.

BB: Did your parents talk a lot? Was there a lot of talk in the house?

RC: Certainly not in the early days, when we were on the farm where I grew up. If he was out working and she was there alone with just another child...

BB: Was your father particularly harsh or anything like that?

RC: When I was a child, I thought he was, but in retrospect, I think I kind of respect him more than I did at the time. I used to think he was a tyrant then. I see he's not.

BB: You had a lot of conflict with him? Any examples appearing in your work?

RC: I can't think of any offhand. Things that appear in my stories are so changed, so manipulated that it would probably be hard to recognize where they originally came from; and they're probably so different in my mind that I don't even remember where they came from—probably something deep in the id that came out.

BB: Do you think you're anti-intellectual?

RC: Occasionally. My characters aren't intellectual. Usually when they resolve a situation it's not through thinking, it's through some action.

I admire people who are demonstrative sometimes. The time I felt like I could kill somebody, when my anger was a slow build, I stayed up all night, dreaming, trying to figure out how I could go to New York, kill him, and come back and get away with it. I was even going so far as to try and figure out all the ways in which I could cover myself with alibis.

BB: You feel like taking advantage of such feelings because you're not habitually a person who expresses his anger. When you realized such feelings are there and can be expressed, the realization changed you?

RC: No, I felt that it was down there all along. It just never came up to the surface. I am capable, and probably every person alive is capable, of killing people under the right circumstances; it's just a matter of coming to those circumstances. Other things can lead to aggressive behavior—like going to karate, getting trained there. There is always tension and an attitude constantly there. And Donna will say that also. My character changed during the period when I went to that karate school. I was generally an easy-going person and slowly got angry. After being there for two years, I could be an instant killer.

BB: Were you glad that that aspect of your personality was revealed?

RC: Yes. I don't think it's necessarily bad, either, because it's something for survival. It's learning more about yourself, knowing that you have it in yourself to turn instantly into something like that.

I am capable, and probably every person alive is capable, of killing people under the right circumstances. It's just a matter of coming to those circumstances.

BB: This makes me think of Bloodstar—the blend of Robert E. Howard and Richard Corben. Your own *Mutant World* and other Warren stuff had a similar post-holocaust slant. And Howard was also a weight lifter. Do you feel any kinship with Howard?

RC: I might have been slightly fascinated, but I'm repelled by many of his philosophies. He was a racist as well as being sadomasochistic, and he did use violence for his own sake—for the enjoyment of it. In fact, I wouldn't say he's one of my favorite writers. That's one of the things I felt slightly queasy about—about accepting this job without adapting *Valley of the Worm* into *Bloodstar*. None of his characters were human to me. They were just brutes and I felt that if I were to do anything with it, I would have turned them into human beings.

BB: The story ends on a Corben note—a mixture of the tragic and the moral.

RC: I believe a fairy-tale happy ending is a false myth. We can hope for good things, but we can't hope for that.

BB: Do you believe in innocence? It's there in characters from your earlier stories.

RC: I don't believe there's a pure innocence. A person could be innocent in murdering a person, but he might have thought about it.

BB: You have innocence, and then it gets perverted in certain ways.

RC: I have this painting. It's a self-portrait. It gets older and older as the years go by, but I don't! If there's anything all men deny, that's their own mortality. We're all doomed and put on earth for a while, and then that's it!

BB: But you're not religious.

RC: No.

BB: Is there a guiding morality to your work?

RC: Yes, in that my heroic characters don't hurt people needlessly or kill people needlessly; they're also not thieves.

BB: I think that attitude abounds in your stories: man is alone; man reverts to savagery; the individual will survive in spite of all these things; civilization might even be a veneer.

RC: I feel it's true. I feel that it's barely underneath the surface; there are still savages.

BB: Let's face it, your work is not inherently optimistic.

RC: The message in my work is that the individuals will survive no matter what. If the modern world destroys itself, there will still be a somebody left to be fully developed and live a full life.

BB: Do you feel that we are verging on a holocaust? Because you deal with that image so much.

RC: I don't know if it will be an instant holocaust. I believe we are courting disaster in many ways. I don't know if it will happen in a flash or if it will happen slowly.

BB: I wonder, would you prefer that world to this kind of civilized world, in a certain sense?

RC: It would be simpler in some ways. Still, the post-holocaust world is doomed, with all the residual radioactivity around. It's not a place where you can live a long life.

BB: People have said you're a right-winger or that there's right-wing politics in your work, with your individualists and moralists and the sexist thing.

RC: Many people might think I'm conservative or a right-winger, but then when you talk to somebody who is a right-winger, you would probably think I'm liberal.

BB: Why would somebody think you're right-wing?

RC: Because my characters are not rebels and they don't want chaos; they know that there have to be rules to follow.

BB: Yet you use images that are crazy and violent and disruptive.

RC: You have to be specific—it may be something related to crumbling worlds.

BB: In certain ways, rampant violence.

RC: It's somethng to react against.

BB: Do you portray violence so graphically because there's something to be said by that imagery?

RC: There's all kinds of violence I portray. It's only graphic in a stylized way. To portray the pain is impossible. It takes some imagination on the viewer's part. It might require more exaggeration, more distortion, more abstractions than I put into the stuff.

BB: What if somebody says your work is violent and pornographic?

RC: That's their opinion.

BB: It glorifies violence, it degrades the human by dwelling on violence.

RC: My characters are never violent for the sake of being violent. It's always forced on them or is a means to an important end.

BB: What ends do you think are important?

RC: Survival and protecting things you love, I imagine.

BB: If your family were in danger, what would you do? How would you react? You're basically a passive person.

RC: I'd kill them on the spot!

BB: Do you think you'd be able to respond in that way?

RC: Yes. I always knew there was one part

of me that could turn like a sword or be violent in an instant.

BB: I can't imagine you getting into an argument!

RC: The trouble is when I argue, not only am I arguing with the other person, I'm arguing with myself.

BB: Your work appears to be controlled. What gets Richard Corben out of control, out of order? You don't get high, you don't drink. What gets you nuts?

RC: I believe I was leading into something like a change of attitude when I was training at karate school. If someone cut me off during that period, I wanted to chase him down. That's repressed in me, that flying off the handle.

BB: Do you ever fight with your wife?

RC: No, I don't raise my voice. If I were to raise my voice, I might become violent.

BB: Do you feel your work causes people to become insensitive to violence because it so glories in violence?

RC: There's something deep in the human id that is both fascinated and repelled by violence. Violence is so much a part of human existence, there's no getting away from it. Even being born and dying.

BB: Do you think those are violent experiences, being born and dying?

RC: Dying often is. Birth is sometimes violent for the mother and has a lot of discomfort.

BB: How does Beth, your daughter, react to the violence and sexuality in your work?

RC: I sheltered Beth from the more violent things, the more explicit sexual stuff.

BB: At what age do you think censorship for kids should end?

RC: When they seem mature.

BB: So you don't have any objection to premarital sex?

RC: No.

BB: Can you see yourself as an advocate of sexual freedom?

RC: I'm an advocate of freedom. That might be included in it.

BB: What do you feel about the repression of sex in America?

RC: It's all right to repress sex among children. It's not all right in adults. They should be able to look at anything they want, within reason, as long as they're not hurting anybody.

BB: It's almost incredible the way people repress sexuality in this country. I think it creates more sexual problems than it solves. It seems criminal how comic books reinforce a repressive mentality.

RC: You can't fight 'em. You can't win by logic—it's not logical. It's just something you have to put up with, or what you can do is sidestep some way . . .

BB: Now Reagan and all those people have got power and these right-wingers for Christ are saying, "We want a moral country!" You'd be one of those likely to go to the camps, as a sexual outlaw.

RC: I wouldn't be very happy about that.

BB: What would you do? How would you react?

RC: If I were an outlaw, I would consider going to another country.

BB: Do you feel there's an outlaw element to your work or that you create outlaw characters? What characteristics align your most significant creations?

RC: They are solitary people, generally introverted, not parts of gangs, not really that sociable; but they are introspective.

BB: Maybe "outlaw" isn't the right word; maybe the right word is "individualist."

RC: I think individualists are responsible for all the great discoveries on earth. All the great scientists or artists are great individuals.

BB: Have there been particularly influential individualists in your life?

RC: There are some artists and people: Einstein, Maxfield Parrish—because he painted the way he lived and the way he wanted. I'd say that because he was an illustrator but was so successful at it, he could just go off and do what he wanted.

There's a fellow who's a friend of mine who worked at Calvin. He's about five or six years younger than I am, and I admire him for his drive and the things he's accomplished, even though I feel I have a greater talent. He has accomplished a lot because he's more aggressive and outgoing than I am, and I admire him for that.

BB: What political movement or specific issue reflects your individualist slant?

RC: The antinuclear movement. I feel the so-called engineers and scientists have this superior attitude that they know everything. And I feel they don't know anything. Our environment consists of a very complex formula, and they have many of the items in the formula, but they don't have all of them, because it's an inhuman operation. People run the thing but they don't know what they're creating. It's a self-perpetuating monster!

BB: In earlier work, in the undergrounds, a lot of stories end fatalistically. The bad guys are often corporate people, the capitalists. You definitely have an anticorporate bias.

RC: To me, the individual is everything. Everything that's important has come from us because we're individuals as opposed to committee! I was impressed by Walt Disney. He was a great individual. He created an empire and became powerful. His corporation became overpossessive about their properties. They've got so much money but they're worried about cartoonists ripping them off in some way.

BB: Do you aspire to founding the Richard Corben empire?

RC: Just in a small way; I want just a small empire.

BB: What's your notion of a small empire?

RC: I want a publishing house. I would like to have enough money to do various things that I want to pursue. I want to pursue my sculptures, my movies, paintings, body building, and so on.

BB: Will you ever draw a character with *small* breasts?

RC: Maybe if you twisted my arm.

CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE

CREATORS' COMMENTS ON CORBEN

JACK KIRBY, Creator of Marvel's Fantastic Four, Thor, and others.

He's a hard worker, someone in search of a hero. While his hero is a Conan type—one with a lot of muscle but not a modern-type superman—Corben is his own opposite. He'll never function that way but would like to; I'll never be an acrobat, but most of my main heroes are. I don't think Corben would create another heroic image if he could; this one fulfills his particular fantasy perfectly.

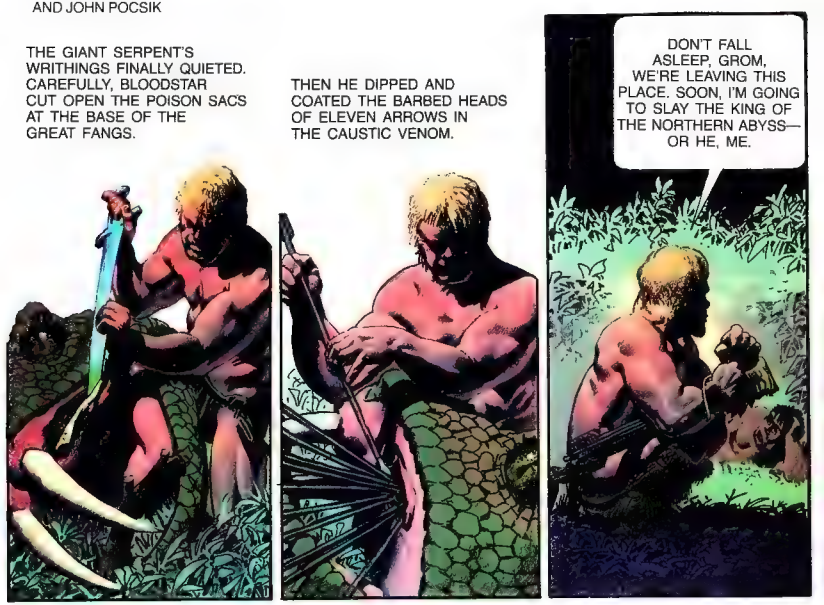
MOEBIUS: France's foremost cartoonist.

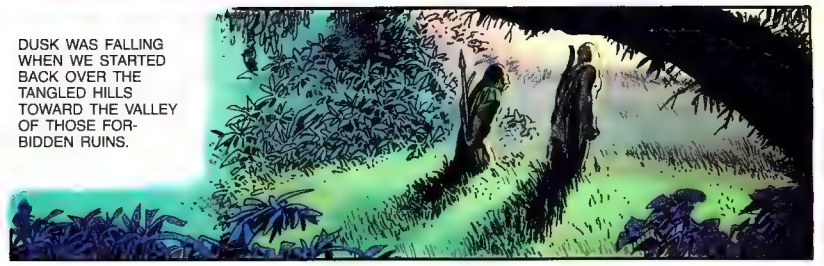
He uses the body, its sexuality, in a free and beautiful way. He's not afraid to show it; he's completely free and shows sex organs as they naturally are. He may be one of the first artists to do so commercially and is certainly one of the strongest. His work is erotic but not in the traditional way—there's a joy of sex, not hidden but very much as it is. He uses style but is not overstylized, at least not as traditional eroticism is—unless you speak in the Grecian sense. He dreams of human anatomy very beautiful with lots of control. And I love his personality. Nobody knows him; he is a mystery. Yet through his drawings we are very close.

ROBERT E. HOWARD'S
BLOODSTAR

BY RICHARD CORBEN.
JOHN JAKES.
AND JOHN POCSIK

In search of Helva and little Bloodstar, Grom and Bloodstar came upon a group of ravaged Aesirians, apparently killed by the demon that haunts the valley. They set up a trap to lure the sinister serpent Satha, and Bloodstar offered himself as bait, to avenge his former comrades


THE GIANT SERPENT'S WRITHINGS FINALLY QUIETED. CAREFULLY, BLOODSTAR CUT OPEN THE POISON SACS AT THE BASE OF THE GREAT FANGS.
THEN HE DIPPED AND COATED THE BARBED HEADS OF ELEVEN ARROWS IN THE CAUSTIC VENOM.
DON'T FALL ASLEEP, GROM, WE'RE LEAVING THIS PLACE. SOON, I'M GOING TO SLAY THE KING OF THE NORTHERN ABYSS—OR HE, ME.



LATER, AS I FOUND, EVEN AS BLOODSTAR AND I WERE HURRYING THROUGH THE STEAMING NIGHT, TWO OTHER FIGURES HAD REACHED THE DEVASTATED VILLAGE.

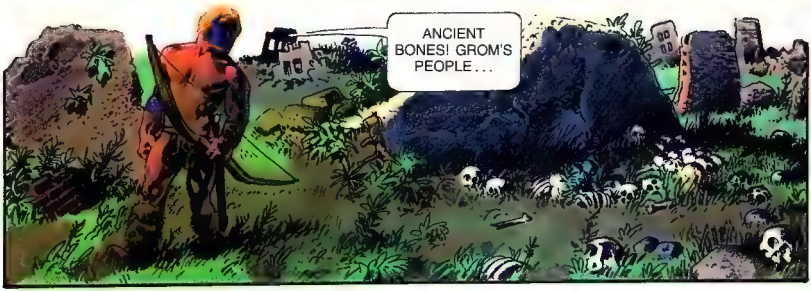
ASHES OF A MIGHTY FUNERAL PYRE... ALL OF MY PEOPLE—GONE!

AH, LITTLE BLOODSTAR! HOW I ENVY YOU, FOR YOU CAN'T KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENED HERE. YOUR FATHER MUST HAVE BUILT THE CLEANSING PYRE. WE'LL FIND THEM TOMORROW.

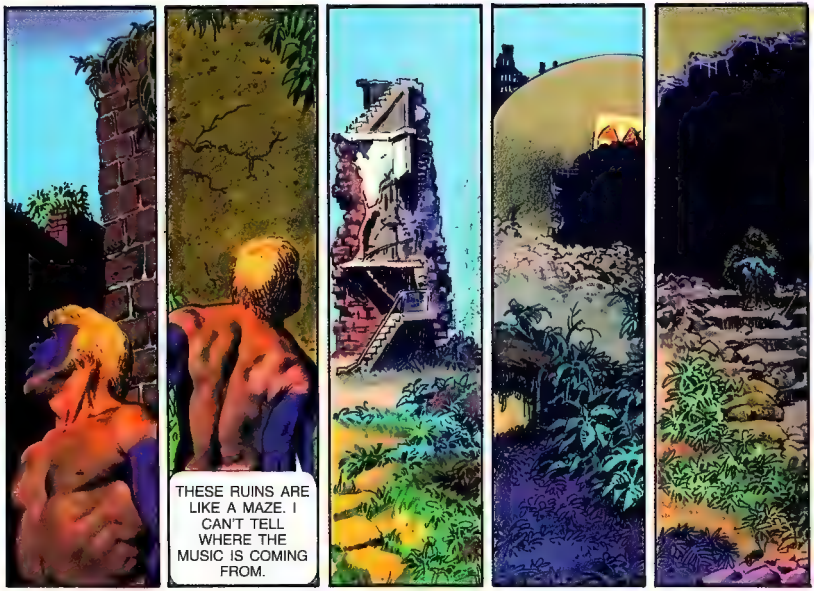
WHY, O GREAT YMIR? WHY? WHY HAVE YOU LET THIS DOOM VANQUISH YOUR PEOPLE!

THUS BLOODSTAR PRAYED: GREAT YMIR, GOD OF THE NORTHLANDS, OPENER OF THE GATE, LOOK NOW UPON YOUR WARRIOR, THE LAST OF THE CHOSEN TRIBE, WHO IS ABOUT TO ENTER INTO BATTLE WITH THE BRINGER OF DARKNESS. GRANT ME THIS DAY THE VICTORY I SEEK OVER THE KING OF THE NORTHERN ABYSS. AND IF IT BE POSSIBLE BEFORE I DIE, LET ME ALSO CARRY DEATH TO THE SLAYER OF MY LOVE, HELVA. PROTECT YOUR GENTLE SERVANT GROM, AND GRANT HIM SAFE PASSAGE BACK TO THE CAVES OF HIS PEOPLE.

FAREWELL, GROM. YOU'VE BEEN A NOBLE FRIEND. PRAY FOR MY SOUL.
I SHIVERED IN THE STUPENDOUS SILENCE THAT LAY OVER THE PLACE. I WAS AFRAID, AND COWERED UPON THE GROUND AS MY FRIEND STALKED GRIMLY ONWARD

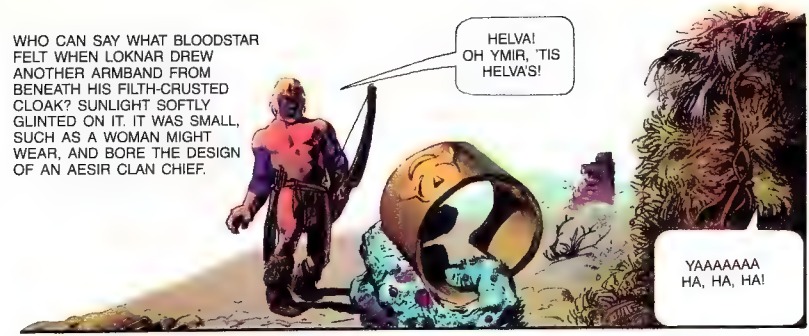

ANCIENT BONES! GROM'S PEOPLE...

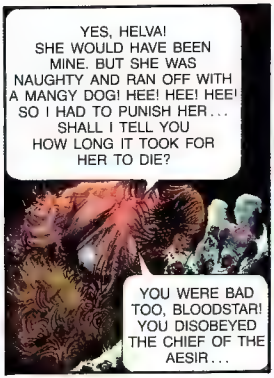
GROM MENTIONED PIPING. IS THAT WHAT I HEAR NOW?


THESE RUINS ARE LIKE A MAZE. I CAN'T TELL WHERE THE MUSIC IS COMING FROM.

EH? SO...
SEE THE SIGNS IN THE GRASS, LITTLE ONE. THEY'RE HEADING BACK IN A DIFFERENT DIRECTION...
YMIR HELP THEM! THEY ARE TRAVELING TOWARD THE DARK VALLEY!

I COULD SEE BLOODSTAR APPROACHING THE BIZARRE PIPE PLAYER. I WONDER IF HE THOUGHT THERE WAS SOMETHING FAMILIAR ABOUT THAT LOATHSOME BEING. SUDDENLY THE HAUNTING MUSIC STOPPED. I HEARD A FAINT, DEMENTED LAUGHTER.
HEH! HEH! WHAT'S THE MATTER? DON'T YOU RECOGNIZE ME?
YOU NEVER WERE VERY BRIGHT, BLOODSTAR... HERE, I'LL GIVE YOU A HINT. HEE, HEE, HEE!
LOKNAR!
THAT'S RIGHT! LOKNAR, FORMER WAR CHIEF OF THE AESIR! DON'T GIVE ME ANY TROUBLE OR I MIGHT HAVE TO PUNISH YOU... AS I DID THEM. HEH! HEH!
I LIKE THIS ARMBAND. IT'S MY FAVORITE. BUT I HAVE ANOTHER ONE, TOO. HEE, HEE, HEE!
WANT TO SEE IT, OLD FRIEND? I THINK YOU DO!


WHO CAN SAY WHAT BLOODSTAR FELT WHEN LOKNAR DREW ANOTHER ARMBAND FROM BENEATH HIS FILTH-CRUSTED CLOAK? SUNLIGHT SOFTLY GLINTED ON IT. IT WAS SMALL, SUCH AS A WOMAN MIGHT WEAR, AND BORE THE DESIGN OF AN AESIR CLAN CHIEF.
HELVA! OH YMIR, 'TIS HELVA'S!
YAAAAAAA HA, HA, HA!


YES, HELVA! SHE WOULD HAVE BEEN MINE. BUT SHE WAS NAUGHTY AND RAN OFF WITH A MANGY DOG! HEE! HEE! HEE! SO I HAD TO PUNISH HER... SHALL I TELL YOU HOW LONG IT TOOK FOR HER TO DIE?
YOU WERE BAD TOO, BLOODSTAR! YOU DISOBEYED THE CHIEF OF THE AESIR...

I COULD FEEL THE FIRE OF HIS RAGE AS BLOODSTAR HURLED HIMSELF FORWARD.

CRUMCH!
WHAP!
CHUNK!
HELVA! YOUR DEATH IS AVENGED!

THE GHASTLY GRIN VANISHED FROM LOKNAR'S FACE. HE WAS JERKED TO HIS FEET AS IF PULLED ERECT BY A ROPE. HIS BODY TWITCHING, LOKNAR RAISED THE PIPES AGAIN TO HIS SORE-FESTOONED LIPS.

I SHUDDERED AS THE DANCING CORPSE BEGAN TO PLAY ITS LURING MELODY OF MADNESS AND DEATH. BLOODSTAR COVERED HIS EARS AND RETREATED. THE GROUND TREMBLED. BEHIND THE GROTESQUELY DANCING PIPER, I COULD HEAR ANOTHER SOUND—A LOUD SUCKING NOISE.

A VAST SHAPE LOOMED BEHIND LOKNAR. IT RIPPLED IN THE SHADOWS. I WATCHED AS BLOODSTAR RAISED HIS BOW.

THE ARROW HISSED THROUGH THE AIR INTO LOKNAR'S ROTTING CHEST.
HE WENT DOWN AS IF STRUCK BY A LIGHTNING BOLT.
BUT THOUGH THE PIPES FLEW FROM HIS LEPROUS FINGERS, THAT GHASTLY PIPING CONTINUED.
THUMP!
BLOODSTAR RACED TOWARD A TIMEWORN PILLAR, IGNORING THE SLITHERING NOISES BEHIND HIM.

WHITE AS CORPSE FLESH, THE THING DRAGGED ITS JELLIED BULK ACROSS THE BROKEN GROUND. THIS WAS NO ORDINARY WORM. IT POSSESSED A DEMON INTELLIGENCE AND AN OBSCENE HUNGER. THE MONSTROUS WORM-SAC PULSED THROBBINGLY AS IT SLID TOWARD MY FRIEND.
TO BE CONTINUED . . .

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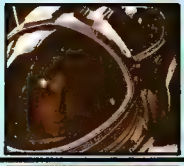

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WELCOME AGAIN, DEAR READER, TO THE **OLD WEST**. CAST YOUR THOUGHTS BACK, IF YOU WILL, TO OUR LAST EPISODE AND TRY TO SUPPRESS A SHUDDER AT THE MEMORY OF SADIE'S FEARSOME SECOND ENCOUNTER WITH **THE STRANGER**. RECALL, TOO, THAT WE FINALLY MET **TEX ARCANA** AND HIS COMPANION, THE ENIGMATIC **WOMAN IN WHITE** AND SPENT A STORMY NIGHT NOT TOO FAR FROM LAREDO AND WHO BECAME EXERCISED OVER **THE RING** THAT SADIE HAD GOTTEN FROM **THE STRANGER**, AND THAT'S NOT ALL SADIE GOT FROM **THE STRANGER**, REMEMBER). LET US RETURN, NOW, TO THE HERETOFORE QUIET VILLAGE OF **HANGMAN'S CORNERS** TO A SCENE OF **DISASTROUS DISARRAY** AT **MARIA CONQUEZO'S PLACE**.

TEX★ARCANA

PART FOUR

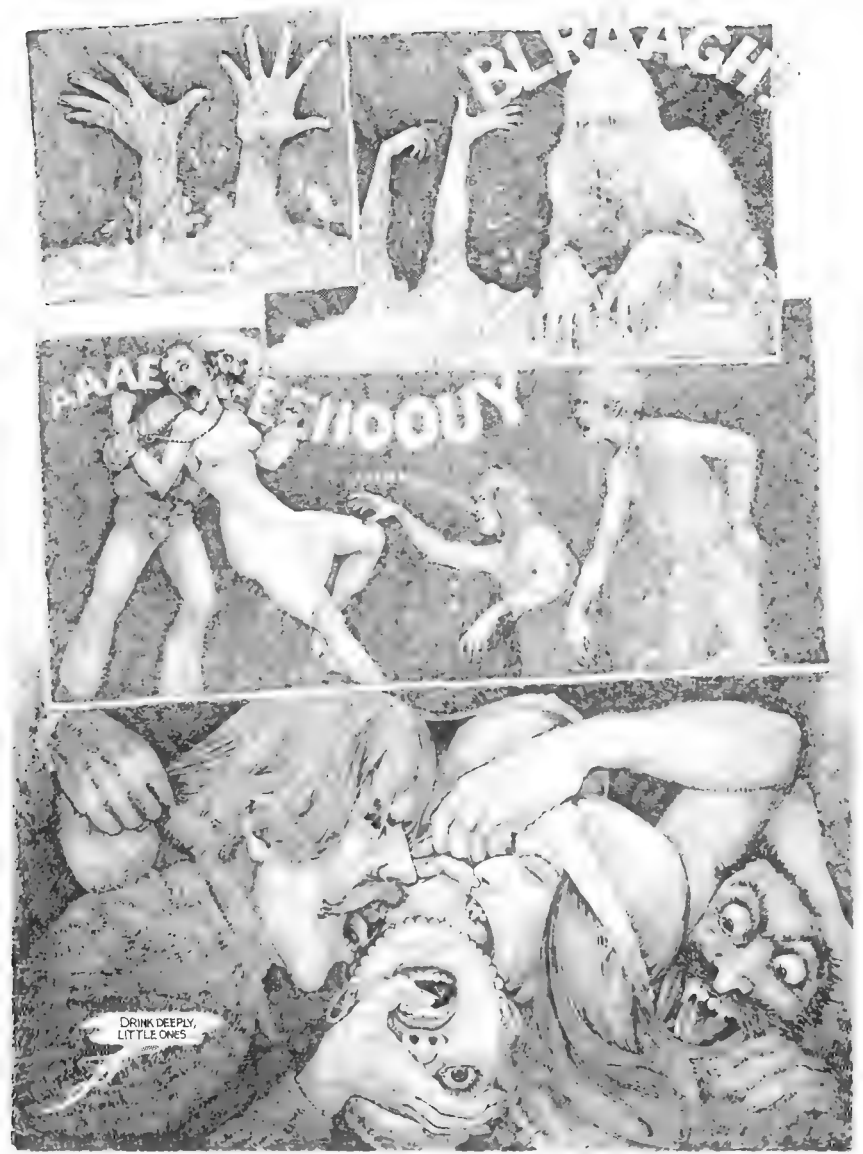
©1981 JOHN FINDLEY

IT'S DERN WEIRD, SHERIFF, WHEN THEY WAKE UP MOST OF 'EM ARE CRAVIN' FRUIT JUICE AN' COOKIES
YUCK!
WHERE TH' HELL'S DOC MASON, NOW THAT WE NEED HIM?
FOMKINA FOMPIER ACHIEVEMENT
LISTEN SHERIFF
JUS' SHUT UP WITH THAT FOM-PEER CRAP AN' FIND SOME MORE COOKIES!
YIPE!!
UH SHERIFF JEEZ! LOOK OUT, ROGER!
LISTEN, SHERIFF, I'M WORRIED THERE'S SOME DAMN FUNNY STUFF GOIN' ON AN' SADIE'S BACK AT TH' NOOSE AND GIBBET, SICK AN' ALL ALONE
ROGER AN' ME, WE'RE GONNA GO BACK AN' CHECK ON HER
GOOD IDEA, BILL. SOME O' YOU STAY HERE AN' HELP THESE FOLKS GIT ON THEIR FEET—THOSE AS CAN GIT.
...JED! YOU BE ROUNDIN' UP A SEARCH PARTY T' LOOK FER MARIA ..AN' CHICO, IF THAT'S WHO REALLY DONE THIS...
..THE REST OF US'LL GO CHECK ON SADIE. (GLURPLE...GLUP) AN' MAYBE GIT A DRINK ER TWO. (BURP!) THIS STUFF'S AWFUL!

AND, AS THE DISCERNING READER WILL HAVE GUESSED, SADIE DOES, INDEED, NEED SOME CHECKING ON...

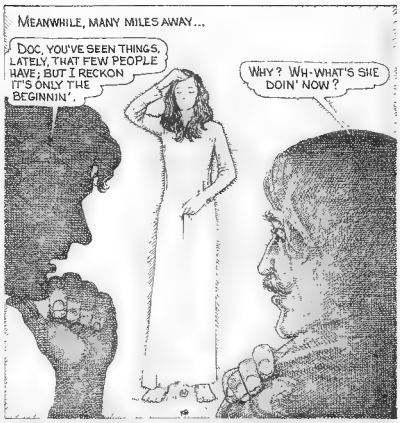
AND, SEVERAL MILES WEST OF TOWN, IN A CAVERN...IN A CANYON....

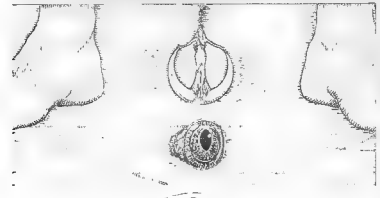
SLEEM! HAROL'! WECK OPE AN' SAY HELLO TO MARIA! (HEH HEH HEH
COME ON, LE'S GEET OUTA HERE. I DOAN LIKE DEES PLESS, PLUS IT'EENK YOU'RE CREHZY!


BLRAAGH!
DRINK DEEPLY, LITTLE ONES

...YOU WILL HAVE NEED FOR STRENGTH.
FOR SOON THE TOWNFOLK OF HANGMAN'S CORNERS WILL RISE UP AGAINST US.
P-PRAISE THE LORD...
T-T-T-PLEASE MY WILL AVAIL YOU NOTHING, MY DEAR SADIE.
WE ARE MORE THAN A MATCH FOR THE LIKES OF THEM.
SADIE! YOU OKAY?
JUST DRINKING, SADIE!
YOU JUST BE AHEAD ON UP AND CHECK ON SADIE. I'LL UH... CATCH UP WITH YA.
YEAH, SURE, SHERIFF.
JUST IN CASE, SHERIFF.

WELL, SHE SHORE AIN'T HERE.
AN' THE PLACE IS A REAL MESS!
THEAH'S ICKY STUFF ALL OVER!
MAYBE SHE'S OUT BACK... IN TH' PRIVY.
NO, I JUS' CAME FROM THERE.
SHE WERE TOO SICK TO GO OUT. SEE... THE CHAMBER POT?
DOC MASON TOL' HER T'STAY IN BED.
JUS' WHERE TH' HELL IS DOC MASON, ANYHOW?


MEANWHILE, MANY MILES AWAY...
DOC, YOU'VE SEEN THINGS, LATELY, THAT FEW PEOPLE HAVE; BUT I RECKON IT'S ONLY THE BEGINNIN'.
WHY? WH-WHAT'S SHE DOIN' NOW?



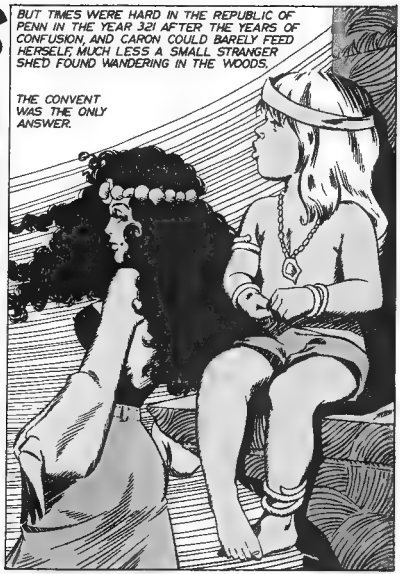
SUDDENLY!

"YFELE," EH? HM! WELL... MUST BE SOMETHING ABOUT THIS "YFELE" THAT MAKES IT DIFFICULT TO MAINTAIN A CALM EXTERIOR. PROBABLY HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH THOSE FOLKS DOWN IN THE CAVERN... IN THE CANYON; OR, PERHAPS IT RECALLS SOMETHING FROM THE MISTY, HALF-REMEMBERED PAST... WHO KNOWS? COULD BE WE'LL FIND THE ANSWER IN THE NEXT EPISODE. COULD BE WE WON'T.

passions

by John Workman

CARON SCOWLED WHEN SHE AND JENNY REACHED THE OLD-TIME RUINS. THE PRIEST WAS NOT YET THERE. THIS MEANT WASTED TIME WAITING FOR HIM.
IT MEANT, TOO, THAT CARON WOULD HAVE TIME TO THINK ABOUT THE LITTLE GIRL ...AND TO HOPE THE NUNS AT THE CONVENT WOULD SHOW SOME KINDNESS TOWARD THE CHILD.
CARON WOULD HAVE LIKED TO KEEP HER FOREVER.


BUT TIMES WERE HARD IN THE REPUBLIC OF PENN IN THE YEAR 321 AFTER THE YEARS OF CONFUSION, AND CARON COULD BARELY FEED HERSELF, MUCH LESS A SMALL STRANGER SHE'D FOUND WANDERING IN THE WOODS.
THE CONVENT WAS THE ONLY ANSWER.

CARON'S REVERIE WAS INTERRUPTED BY THE APPROACH OF JON ARBIT...
...RICH, ECCENTRIC JON...
...TROTTING OUT OF THE WOODS WITH AN OLD-TIME BOOK IN EACH HAND.

ALTHOUGH HE HADN'T SEEN THEM IN WEEKS, JON OFFERED NO WORDS OF GREETING. HE HANDED CARON A BOOK AND KNELT TO SHOW JENNY THE OTHER ONE. WHILE THEY LOOKED AT ANCIENT PICTURES, CARON TOLD HIM WHY THEY WERE THERE. HE SMILED, STOOD, AND POINTED WESTWARD.

IT WAS THE PRIEST, A GNARLED WALKING STICK IN HIS HAND "THE OLD-TIME BOOKS," HE SNARLED, "ARE INHERENTLY EVIL. YOU KNOW THEY MUST BE EXORCISED...OR DESTROYED. THEY AROUSE... SINFUL PASSIONS."

"ONLY THOSE WHO ARE CLOSE TO GOD MAY FACE THOSE FOUL WORDS WITHOUT FALLING UNDER THEIR INFLUENCE...BECOMING SLAVES OF THESE TERRIBLE PASSIONS

"I WILL TAKE THE BOOKS--AND THE CHILD--AND THEY WILL BE TESTED. THE BOOKS WILL PROBABLY BE BURNED... AS THE CERTAINTY OF HELL-FIRE WILL BURN AWAY THE CHILD'S SINFUL WAYS. SHE WILL BECOME A TRUE SUBJECT OF GOD."

LITTLE JENNY WAS SCARED BY THE MAN. SHE HID, BUT HIS DARK AND CRUEL EYES FOUND HER.

CARON TURNED AWAY AND WEPT AS THE PRIEST TOOK JENNY DOWN THE ROAD. SHE BEGAN TO REMEMBER HER OWN TIME SPENT IN AN ORPHANAGE.

JON ARBIT SMILED AND LED HER TOWARD THE WOODS. "WE'LL RETRIEVE JENNY TONIGHT," HE SAID SIMPLY. "WE CAN TRAVEL A LITTLE FARTHER WEST. WE'LL EXPLORE...HAVE FUN...READ LOTS OF BOOKS...AND LEAD LIVES OF PASSION."

"YES," SHE SAID.

HE BEGAN TO TAKE OFF HER CLOTHES

"YES," SHE SAID.

THIS STORY IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF EDGAR ALLAN POE.

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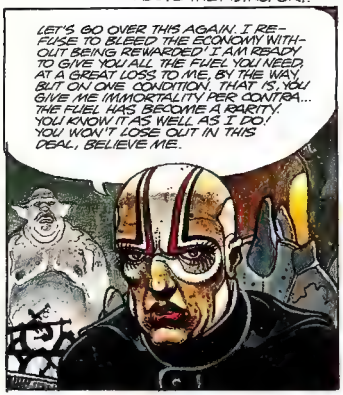
THE IMMORTALS' FETE

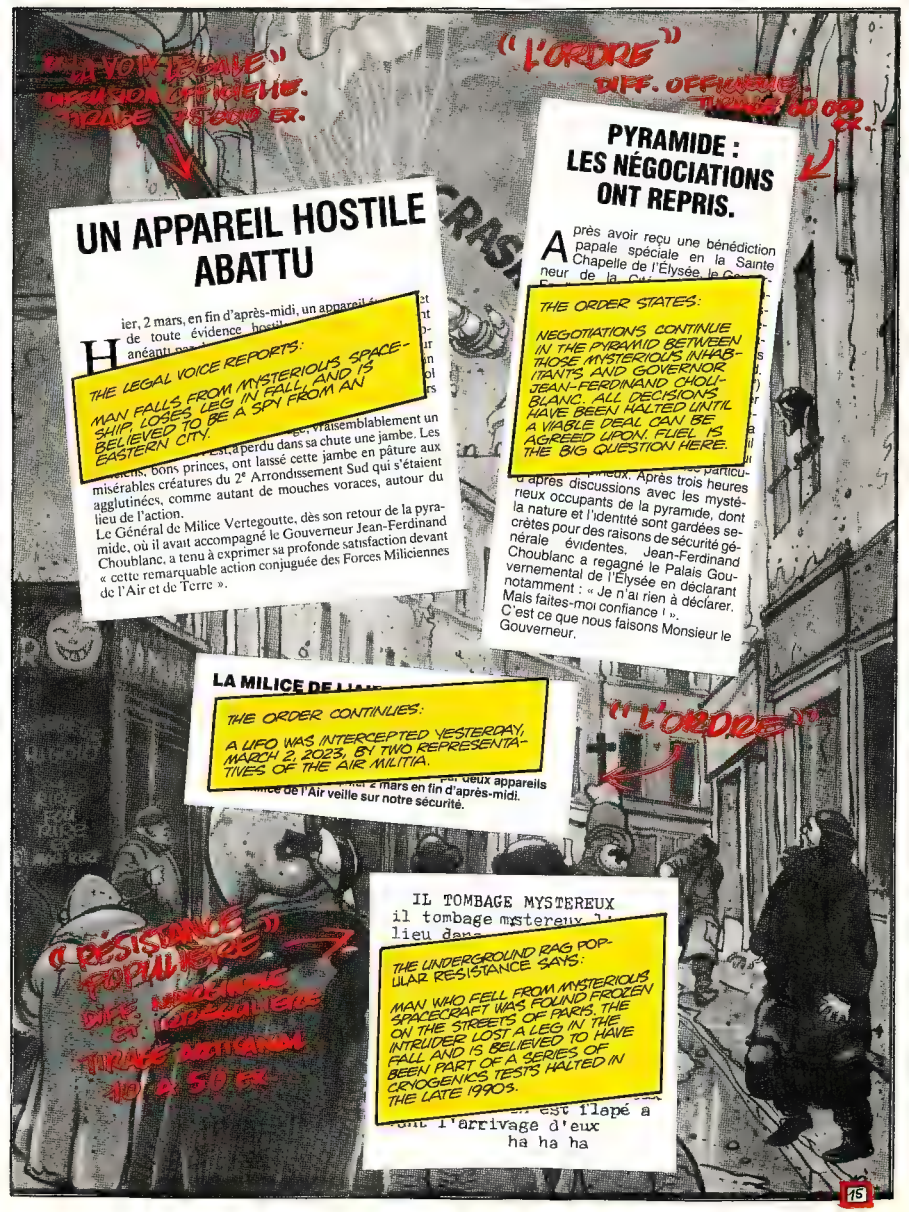
Last we saw, the Parisian government was contemplating war, in order to stabilize the city's income. Their decision was instigated by a group of aliens seen hovering over the city in a stone pyramid. The intruders intended to steal the local fuel reserves. Meanwhile, an antiquated space capsule, equipped with some sort of odd cryogenics gear, dropped a frozen man onto a city street. The gendarmerie are looking into this (and are terribly confused).

NOW, JOIN US, DEAR READER, AS WE OBSERVE THE PYRAMID DWELLERS, HOVERING ABOVE THE ASTROPORT.


LET'S GO OVER THIS AGAIN. I REFUSE TO BLEED THE ECONOMY WITHOUT BEING REWARDED! I AM READY TO GIVE YOU ALL THE FUEL YOU NEED, AT A GREAT LOSS TO ME, BY THE WAY, BUT ON ONE CONDITION. THAT IS, YOU GIVE ME IMMORTALITY! PER CONTRA... THE FUEL HAS BECOME A RARITY. YOU KNOW IT AS WELL AS I DO! YOU WON'T LOSE OUT IN THIS DEAL, BELIEVE ME.

THAT'S ENOUGH, CHOULBLANC! TO DISRUPT UNIVERSAL ORDER IS OUT OF THE QUESTION!
IT IS EQUALLY OUT OF THE QUESTION TO GIVE A HUMAN—A MISERABLE ENTITY AMONG MISERABLES—THE ULTIMATE AND SUPREME STATE OF IMMORTALITY!
BE OFF WITH YOU! AND DON'T FORGET THAT WE HAVE ALL THE TIME IN THE WORLD, WORLDS, THAT IS!

FORGET IMMORTALITY! I WOULD BE CONTENTED WITH A SIMPLE LIFE... PROLONGATION OF TWO OR THREE CENTURIES...
BBS, ACCOMPANY THIS MORTAL!
YES, MR. GOVERNOR?
TO THE ELYSEE, GENERAL! QUICKLY AND QUIETLY...

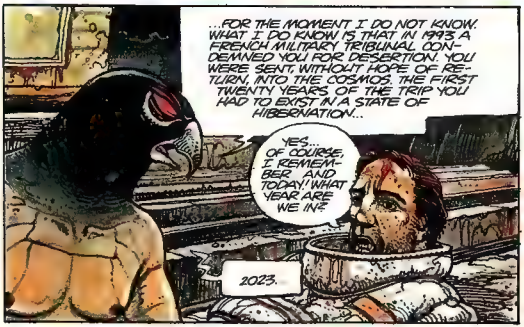

"LA VOIX LÉGALE"
DIFFUSION CONFIDENTIELLE.
TIRAGE : 5 000 EX.
"L'ORDRE"
DIFF. OFFICIELLE.
TIRAGE : 50 000 EX.
UN APPAREIL HOSTILE ABATTU
Hier, 2 mars, en fin d'après-midi, un appareil
de toute évidence
anéanti
THE LEGAL VOICE REPORTS:
MAN FALLS FROM MYSTERIOUS SPACESHIP, LOSES LEG IN FALL, AND IS BELIEVED TO BE A SPY FROM AN EASTERN CITY.
est, a perdu dans sa chute une jambe. Les
vraisemblablement un
misérables créatures du 2e Arrondissement Sud qui s'étaient
agglutinées, comme autant de mouches voraces, autour du
lieu de l'action.
Le Général de Milice Vertegoutte, dès son retour de la pyramide, où il avait accompagné le Gouverneur Jean-Ferdinand Choublanc, a tenu à exprimer sa profonde satisfaction devant « cette remarquable action conjuguée des Forces Miliciennes de l'Air et de Terre ».
PYRAMIDE : LES NÉGOCIATIONS ONT REPRIS.
Après avoir reçu une bénédiction papale spéciale en la Sainte Chapelle de l'Élysée, le Co
neur de la
THE ORDER STATES:
NEGOTIATIONS CONTINUE IN THE PYRAMID BETWEEN THOSE MYSTERIOUS INHABITANTS AND GOVERNOR JEAN-FERDINAND CHOULBLANC. ALL DECISIONS HAVE BEEN HALTED UNTIL A VIABLE DEAL CAN BE AGREED UPON. FUEL IS THE BIG QUESTION HERE.
particu-
après discussions avec les mystérieux occupants de la pyramide, dont la nature et l'identité sont gardées secrètes pour des raisons de sécurité générale évidentes. Jean-Ferdinand Choublanc a regagné le Palais Gouvernemental de l'Élysée en déclarant notamment : « Je n'ai rien à déclarer. Mais faites-moi confiance ! ».
C'est ce que nous faisons Monsieur le Gouverneur.
LA MILICE DE L
THE ORDER CONTINUES:
A LIFO WAS INTERCEPTED YESTERDAY, MARCH 2, 2023, BY TWO REPRESENTATIVES OF THE AIR MILITIA.
deux appareils
2 mars en fin d'après-midi.
Milice de l'Air veille sur notre sécurité.
"L'ORDRE"
IL TOMBAGE MYSTEREUX
il tombage mystereux
lieu dans
THE UNDERGROUND RAG POPULAR RESISTANCE SAYS:
MAN WHO FELL FROM MYSTERIOUS SPACECRAFT WAS FOUND FROZEN ON THE STREETS OF PARIS. THE INTRUDER LOST A LEG IN THE FALL AND IS BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN PART OF A SERIES OF CRYOGENICS TESTS HALTED IN THE LATE 1990s.
est flapé a
ont l'arrivage d'eux
ha ha ha
"RÉSISTANCE POPULAIRE"
DIFF. CLANDESTINE ET CONFIDENTIELLE
TIRAGE NATIONAL 10 à 50 EX.

METRO, LINE 4, PORTE D'ORLÉANS-PORT DE CLIGNANCOURT, ABANDONED IN 2012.

EXIT
CALM DOWN!
AAAAAH!
MY LEG! GOOD GOD, WHERE IS MY LEG!??
WHO ARE YOU?
HORUS! THE ONE TO WHOM YOU OWE THE PROLONGATION OF YOUR MISERABLE MORTAL LIFE... THE ONE WHO IS GOING TO DO YOU THE HONOR OF LIVING IN YOUR BODY, THE ONE WHO KNOWS EVERYTHING ABOUT YOUR WRETCHED EXISTENCE AS A DESERTER, ALCIDE NIKOPOL!
STAY CALM! PITIFUL HUMAN. LISTEN TO WHAT I HAVE TO SAY. I, HORUS, GOD AMONG GODS, IMMORTAL AMONG IMMORTALS...

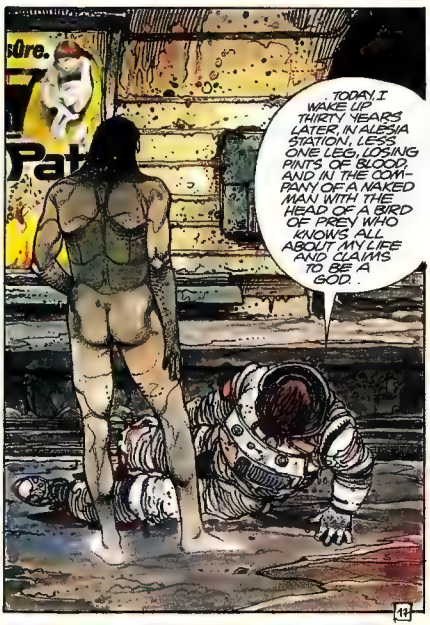
NIKOPOL... ALCIDE NIKOPOL!?! THAT'S MY NAME! WHO ARE YOU? GOOD GOD, AND HOW DID I GET BACK HERE!?!

ALESIA
...HERE, IN PARIS? I RECOGNIZE THIS! METRO STATION, ALESIA, IN THE 14TH! IN FRANCE, ON EARTH!!! GOOD GOD. HOW DID I COME BACK TO EARTH?!?


...FOR THE MOMENT I DO NOT KNOW. WHAT I DO KNOW IS THAT IN 1993 A FRENCH MILITARY TRIBUNAL CONDEMNED YOU FOR DESERTION. YOU WERE SENT, WITHOUT HOPE OF RETURN, INTO THE COSMOS. THE FIRST TWENTY YEARS OF THE TRIP YOU HAD TO SPEND IN A STATE OF HIBERNATION...
YES... OF COURSE, I REMEMBER... AND TODAY! WHAT YEAR ARE WE IN?
2023.

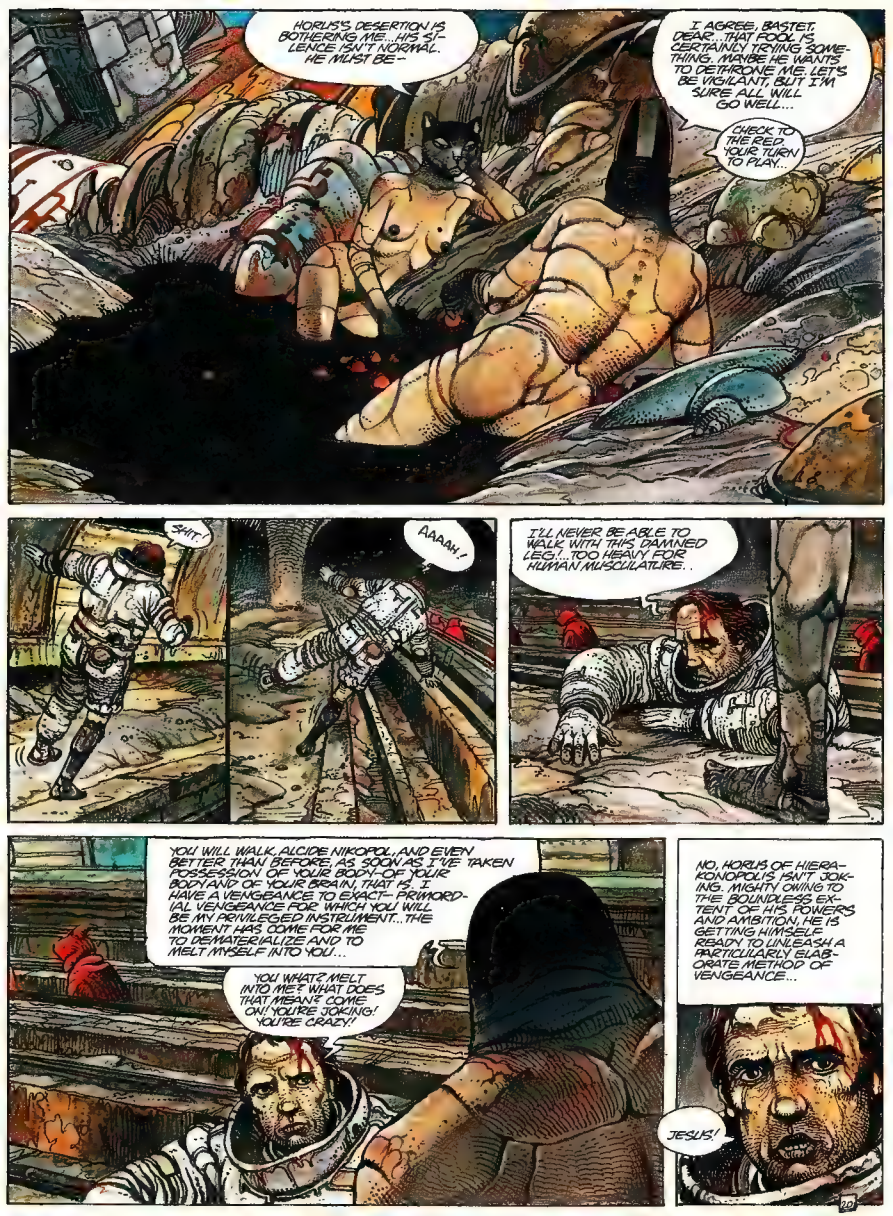
2023! MY GOD!
...WHICH MEANS THAT YOU LEFT YOUR PLANET THIRTY YEARS AGO, SAD MORTAL... AND AS I'VE JUST BARELY BROUGHT YOU OUT OF DEEP FREEZE, I DEDUCE THAT YOU DID AN EXTRA TEN YEARS IN A STATE OF HIBERNATION... CERTAINLY A BLOW TO THIS XB2 THAT ACCOMPANIED YOU...
XB2... XB2... YES, I REMEMBER... MY GUARDIAN, HE, TOO, WAS PUNISHED. BUT FOR OTHER REASONS. THE ADJUNCT CHIEF ROBOT XB2...

GOOD GOD. I DON'T UNDERSTAND ANY OF THIS! I REMEMBER IT AS IF IT WERE A YEAR AGO... 1992... I REFUSED TO FIGHT AGAINST THE SINO-SOVIET COALITION I DESERTED. I WAS CAUGHT, PUT ON TRIAL, AND ONE YEAR LATER, I WAS FLOATING IN SPACE. IN A FLYING REFRIGERATOR ACCOMPANIED BY A PARANOID ROBOT, NO LESS.

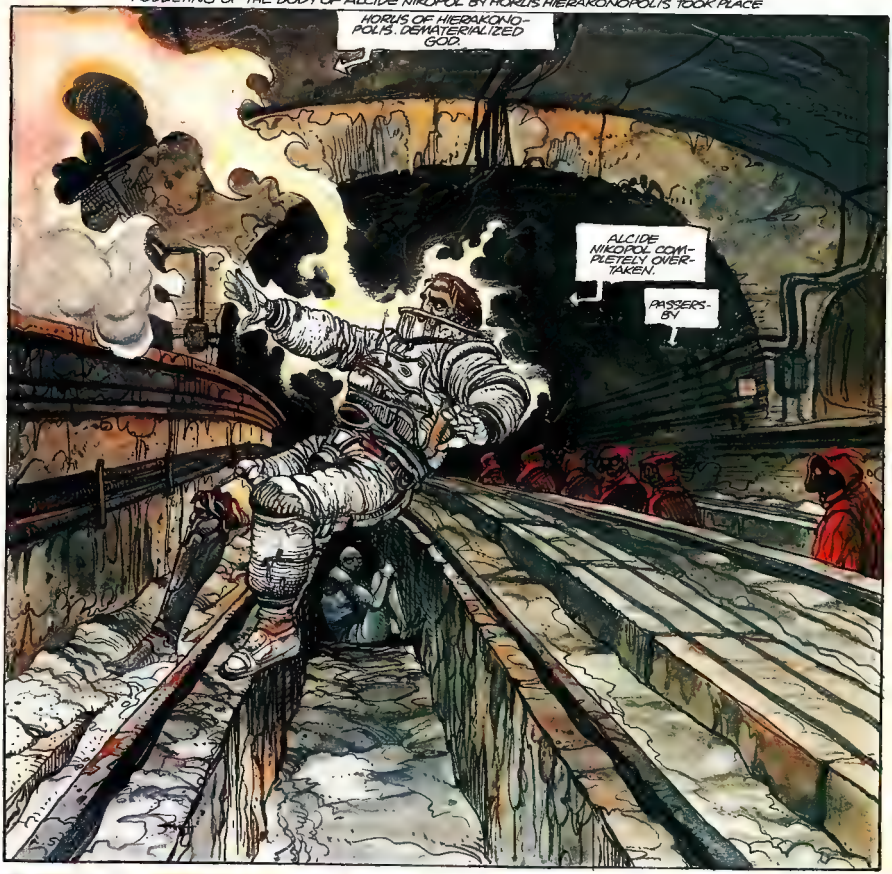

TODAY, I WAKE UP THIRTY YEARS LATER, IN ALESIA STATION, LESS ONE LEG, LOSING PINTS OF BLOOD, AND IN THE COMPANY OF A NAKED MAN WITH THE HEAD OF A BIRD OF PREY WHO KNOWS ALL ABOUT MY LIFE AND CLAIMS TO BE A GOD...

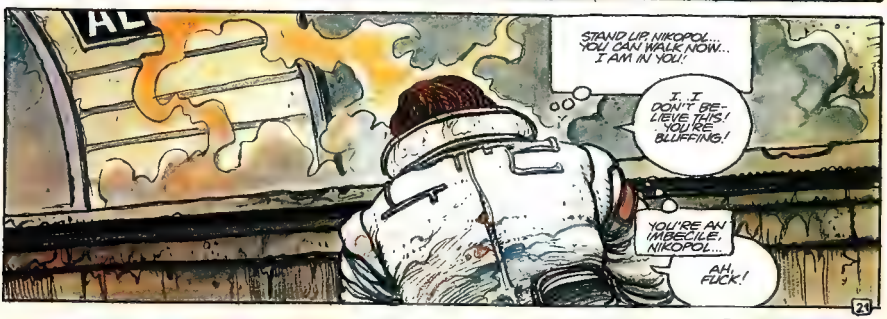
I UNDERSTAND YOUR CONFUSION AND HAVE TAKEN YOUR INTELLECTUAL LIMITS INTO CONSIDERATION IN THIS MATTER, NIKOPOL. I BELIEVE THAT YOU CAN THANK ME FOR TAKING YOU IN MY CHARGE--ME, HORUS, GOD OF HIERAKONOPOLIS, SON OF ISIS AND OSIRIS, POWERFUL AND UNIVERSAL CREATOR.
I UNDERSTAND NOTHING...
I MUST SAY, HOWEVER...
HOP!
HEY, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
...THAT IN THE COURSE OF THE LITTLE TRIP YOU TOOK FROM YOUR SHIP TO HERE, I WAS ABLE TO PERFORM A RAPID PHYSICAL AND PSYCHIC EXAMINATION OF YOUR BODY. APART FROM THE HABITUAL HUMAN DEFECTS OF YOUR RACE, THE RESULT APPEARED RATHER SATISFACTORY TO ME...
SATISFACTORY!!!! ARE YOU MAKING FUN OF ME!!? MUTILATED, WITH ONE LEG FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE, AND YOU FIND THAT SATISFACTORY!?!
TOTALLY SATISFACTORY...YOUR BODY, COMPARED TO THOSE OF THE UNFORTUNATE ONES I'VE HAD TO LIVE WITH FOR THE PAST FEW DAYS, IS IN A PERFECT STATE. DISEASE AND MUTATION CORRODE THE ANNEX QUARTERS OF THE CITY...HEALTHY BODIES ARE A RARITY.' THE LAST ONE I SAW BELONGED TO AN OLD CRANK WHO BELIEVED IN A SINGLE GOD.
HIS BRAIN BECAME UNCONTROLLABLE. YOUR ARRIVAL WAS PROVIDENTIAL, BELIEVE ME...
AAH. IT HURTS.
AS TO THE PROBLEM WITH YOUR LEG, I'LL FIX THAT IMMEDIATELY.
AAAARR. THE PAIN GETS WORSE WITH THE UNFREEZING... DO SOMETHING...
QUICK!

REST ASSURED! I'LL ANAESTHETIZE YOUR LEG BEFORE THE TRANSPLANT.
THE TRANSPLANT!? WHAT TRANSPLANT? WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH THAT PIECE OF IRON?
YOUR NEW LEG, ALCIDE NIKOPOL... A STEEL LEG...IT WILL BE INDESTRUCTIBLE!
THREE HOURS LATER...
DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING?
SILENCE!
I'M SHAPING IT RIGHT NOW.
SO THERE... YOU CAN STAND UP NOW AND TRY TO WALK..
...?


HORUS'S DESERTION IS BOTHERING ME...HIS SILENCE ISN'T NORMAL. HE MUST BE--
I AGREE, BASTET, DEAR...THAT POOL IS CERTAINLY TRYING SOMETHING. MAYBE HE WANTS TO DETHRONE ME. LET'S BE VIGILANT, BUT I'M SURE ALL WILL GO WELL...
CHECK TO THE RED. YOUR TURN TO PLAY..
SHIT!
AAAAH!
I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO WALK WITH THIS DAMNED LEG!...TOO HEAVY FOR HUMAN MUSCULATURE..
YOU WILL WALK, ALCIDE NIKOPOL, AND EVEN BETTER THAN BEFORE, AS SOON AS I'VE TAKEN POSSESSION OF YOUR BODY--OF YOUR BODY AND OF YOUR BRAIN, THAT IS. I HAVE A VENGEANCE TO EXECUTE--PRIMORDIAL VENGEANCE FOR WHICH YOU WILL BE MY PRIVILEGED INSTRUMENT...THE MOMENT HAS COME FOR ME TO DEMATERIALIZE AND TO MELT MYSELF INTO YOU...
YOU, WHAT? MELT INTO ME? WHAT DOES THAT MEAN? COME ON! YOU'RE JOKING! YOU'RE CRAZY!
NO, HORUS OF HIERAKONOPOLIS, ISN'T JOKING. MIGHTY OWING TO THE BOUNDLESS EXTENT OF HIS POWERS AND AMBITION, HE IS GETTING HIMSELF READY TO UNLEASH A PARTICULARLY GLABORATE METHOD OF VENGEANCE...
JESUS!

IT WAS AT THIS TIME, THE THIRD OF MARCH 2023, AT THE ALÉSIA STATION, THAT THE ABDUCTING OF THE BODY OF ALCIDE NIKOPOL BY HORUS HIERAKONOPOLIS TOOK PLACE

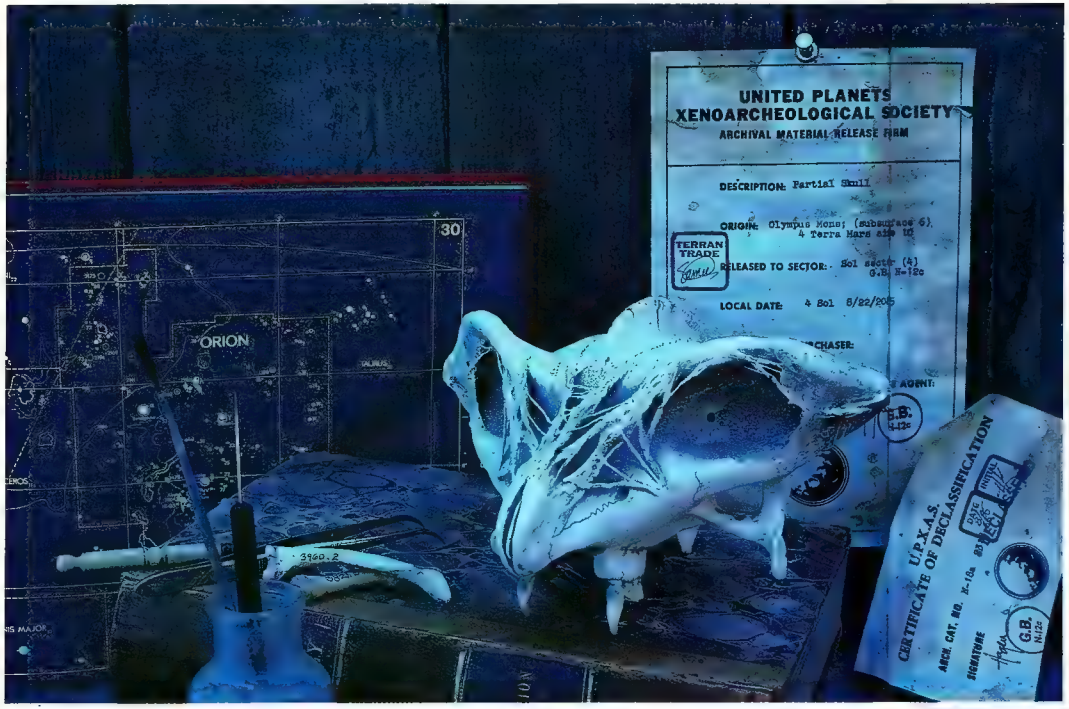




TO BE CONTINUED...

XENOPALEONTOLOGY

by Joel Hagen



Both archeology and science fiction explore the unknown, in the first case, unknown realities; in the other, unexplored fantasy. My ceramic sculptures are not intended to be pretty, but to be intriguing, xenopaleontological games as much as art objects. And that is the essence of science fiction for me, an arena for mental gymnastics, not mental escape.

Text excerpts from:
An Introduction to Xenopaleontology: The Study of Ancient Extraterrestrial Life. Interplanetary Council Public Document #3684.18, Milburn, Peters, et al., 2 May 2389.

"The silent grey plateau surrounding the two scientists on Tau Ceti's fourth planet had once been a shallow sea. Now, a cold wind dried their eyes as they bored carefully into the gritty rock with compression brushes. The men were xenopaleontologists, scientists studying the ancient life of other worlds. Between them lay a magnificently preserved fossil millions of years old, a Trinda-like skeleton over a meter in length. Could those three delicately articulated appendages be responsible for creating the puzzling ridge and terrace formations peculiar to this stratum?"

This description of Winston and Henning's discovery of Pliocryptus on Tau Ceti 4 is familiar to every schoolchild. Yet in the twentieth century it would have been looked on as science fiction, with the stigma of condescension attached to it. Xenopaleontologists are like science-fiction writers. From a small foundation of hard, factual material, they must logically extrapolate a complex structure. In science fiction's early days, writers plied their imaginations to speculate on alien life forms and cultures. They asked themselves basic questions. What life processes might exist on a heavy-gravity planet, a gas giant, in a methane atmosphere? How would humans communicate with an alien intelligence? What concepts might we exchange? And always, what would alien life look like? Drawing on a foundation of available facts, they built up ingenious and entertainingly complex answers to these questions.

Even in reconstructing Earth's own past, paleontologists have had to draw complex conclusions from scanty evidence. Frequently the scientist faced the task of calculating from a fragment of jawbone, for example, not only the type of creature it represented but also its diet, musculature, size, and weight, and even something of its habits and the climate in which it lived. In examining Earth's past, we at least have a basis of familiarity with the life processes responsible for the fossils we explore.

Since several dozen worlds are now known to contain or to have contained life, the problems are greater. Quite often the planet has no surviving biosphere, no living forms from which to draw analogies to fossil remains. Even at best, with the entirety of an unknown fossil well preserved, the xenopaleontologist has no point of reference at which to begin assembly. Did a particular piece function as a head in the creature, or as a pelvis? Did the creature even have body structures analogous to head and pelvis? The scope in the universe of an organism's capacity to capitalize on an energy flux has led to radical departures from terran metabolic processes. The body parts of a xenobiont that persist in fossil form rarely have direct counterparts among earthly species, especially when only scant fragments remain. Even with Kirilian scanners and advanced analytical equipment at his disposal, the xenopaleontologist must rely on his deductive and extrapolative skills and a disciplined imagination in order to begin reconstruction. In essence, this is science fiction in its purest sense.

For decades, the foyer of the Museum of Extraterrestrial Life was dominated by Myxotropes Colanthum, a thirty-meter, magnificently mounted fossil skeleton from Capella's third planet. It consisted of thousands of delicately flattened and curved spinose cylinders. Each was of differentiated calcium-based material, fully vesiculated toward the major diameter. Terminating what was presumed to be the anterior of the creature were numerous heavily ridged interlocking hexagonal plates. Computer sorting established a smooth size and curvature gradient for the bones along bilaterally symmetrical planes. Kirilian scanning confirmed a vital polarity corresponding to this model. Nonpersistent cartilage analogues were presumed as skeletal linking mechanisms, and scientists were thrilled at the first fossil discovery in the universe to rival in size the great whales and sauropods of Earth's past.

Years after the installation of the skeleton at METL, the biologist H. M. Ralston discovered several isolated species of microscopic life in vernal pools of an equatorial region on Capella 3. Something about them nagged at the back of his mind. On a visit to METL it came to him. Two of the species were similar in form to the bones and plates comprising Myxotropes. Mentally rearranging the skeleton, he was sure of his insight. The curved cylindrical bones and the hexagonal plates were remnants of thousands of individual organisms of two species existing as symbiotic shoaling colonies. The entire group had died simultaneously, and the size gradient and isolation had given the impression of its being a single large organism. Careful analysis of the microscopic descendants he had discovered confirmed his theory, and the wonderful "skeleton" was taken down and disarticulated.

Hoax and illusion are possible because people want to believe in strange and wonderful things. Dawson's superb hoax of the Piltdown man was achieved through a thorough knowledge of paleontology, skillful use of a file on simian teeth, and potassium bichromate to stain the bone convincingly. But it went over as meteorically as it did because a few scientists at the time were passionately seeking just such a missing link as the one he provided. That passion in us for the strange and mysterious is the lubricant in any bit of misdirection. That passion was strongly behind Beringer's belief in the 1720s that fossils were capricious creations of God for testing man's faith. It blinded him to the ridiculousness of hundreds of plaster "fossils" of star shapes, moons, bugs, trees, and the word *God* in Latin and Arabic all planted in his excavation by snickering students. Beringer and others accepted them all, and his book of 1726 expounding on their origin was for a time the talk of Europe.

In the 1830s, the public drank in Richard Locke's fabrication in the *New York Sun* about astronomer John Herschel's supposed telescopic finds on the moon. People hailed the discovery of lunar beavers and unicorns, and on the day when flocks of the man-bat, "Vespertilio Homo," were written about, the modest *New York Sun* surpassed the circulation of any daily paper in the world. All of us share some passion for a glimpse of the "impossible," and the rationalization that science does make mistakes; facts are not inviolable.

In the early exploration of Sirius 5, believed to be a dead world, commercial sale of tons of thermoclastic mineral from exposed strata financed further research. Cheaply processed and cold-molded, the material made a near-perfect insulator even in centimeter thicknesses. When miners at one of the original sites found marginal healing occurring at the perimeter, we realized we had been unwittingly exterminating a unique life form poised in a subtle electromagnetic energy flux. Its metabolism was so slow and so foreign to us that we did not perceive it as life. The organic compounds—amino acids, hydrocarbons—in the material were not normally complex enough to be associated with vital processes. On Sirius 5 we had perceived no visual clues that we were dealing with a life form. There was no mechanical disequilibrium of the organism, and no regular structuring in disconformity to known crystallization patterns. That species on Sirius 5 is now extinct, a scientific tragedy caused by lax scrutiny; we were blinded by the material advantages of an unknown substance.

As an ironic footnote to that tragic incident, similar patches of compound material were found in other regions of the planet. Measurement showed a gradual growth not related to crystallization. Field labs were established, and lengthy observations followed. In this case the material was concluded to be nonvital. We were observing nothing more than a spreading hydration phenomenon on a mineral surface.

When we do encounter alien life, I doubt that it will be as familiar as any of my skeletal games. When cataract surgery was first perfected dozens of operations were performed on people blind since birth. Their perceptions were remarkable when they saw for the first time the world they had thought familiar. One young woman excitedly expressed astonishment that men do not really look like trees. Many wandered about twisting continually to look behind them, unable to grasp that visual space extended beyond their peripheral vision. One man, seeing the room he was in and knowing it to be one of many rooms in the house, still found it inconceivable that the entire house would look bigger than the room. In a way, we are all in one room of an enormous, in fact infinite, house. ●

She can be found in HEAVY METAL magazine

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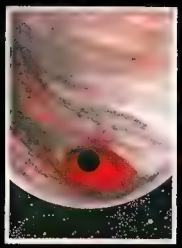
OUTLAND

Sometime within the last century, man has conquered the frontiers of space. Scientific explorations have been replaced by corporate expeditions to exploit the mineral wealth of distant worlds. One of the prime colonies is Io, the innermost moon of Jupiter. Trapped by the fierce gravitational field of the massive planet, Io is an airless, sulfurous lunar body, ripe for plunder by the star miners. Under the glare of Jupiter's stormy red eye, the gigantic girders and panels of Con-Amalgamate 27 are erected—a vast mining complex, which exists solely to extract precious ore from Io's crust. Energy, air, and room are the three most limited commodities on Con-Am's ledgers, forcing the company's 2,144 personnel to live in spartan, dim, and claustrophobic barracks—their bunks resembling a series of metal animal cages—with privacy and comfort sacrificed to industrial economy. They are fugitives and loners, an army of society's misfits. Enduring hardship and boredom, the men and women of Io live by their own rules. Con-Am provides for every need, from rigid safety standards to clean hookers and wild entertainment. Drawn to Io by desperation and greed, the laborers are anonymous drones, trying to forget their pasts. Their futures are counted by the days until their annual tours of duty end. Now something dark and unexpected is happening to Con-Am 27—something that drives men mad, something that kills them.



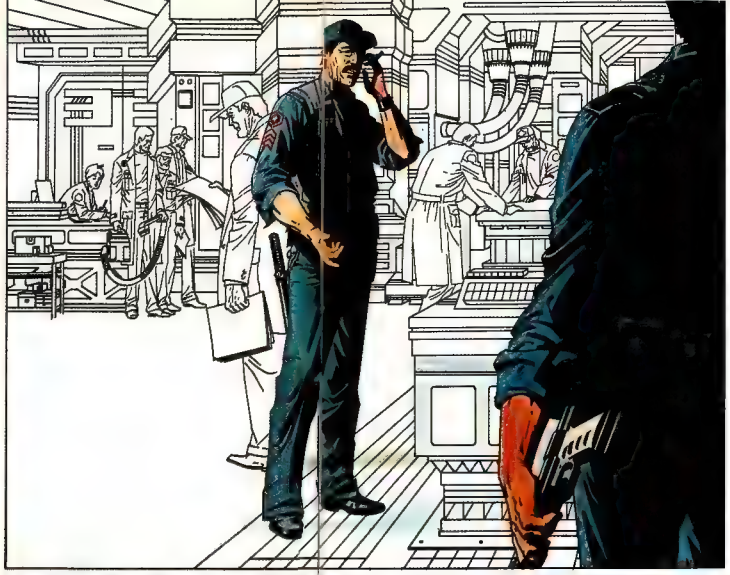
Federal District Marshal William T. O'Niel has barely begun his assignment as Head of Security when the bizarre deaths attract his attention. He is a hardheaded realist, whose big mouth and abrasive manner have consigned him to one obscure interstellar station after another. His tenacity for justice has branded him a troublemaker, and Con-Am 27 is the dumping ground for nonconformists. Still a good cop, O'Niel senses something sinister about the fatalities on Io, and discovers a suspicious pattern unfolding. He sets out to find the truth behind Con-Am 27's efficient mechanical facade—even if he must sacrifice his wife, his career, and his own life in the process.

Con-Am 27 General Manager Mark B. Sheppard is a coolly calculating opportunist, interested only in profits and his own promotion up the corporate ladder. Since taking over the mine's operations, Sheppard has broken all productivity records. He refuses to act on anything which might interfere with the success of his administration.

Security Deputy Montone has already served a tour of duty on Io, and is resigned to the fact that the corporation is more interested in dollars than death statistics. Montone finds himself torn between assisting the new marshal and loyalty to the corporation—until he is drawn into the diabolic mystery of Outland.

Dr. Marian L. Lazarus is the disillusioned company physician, a sarcastic middle-aged woman with a veneer of indifference to the lengthening list of fatalities. She has a wry, biting sense of humor, which she uses to disguise her own sense of inadequacy and failure as a scientist. Although Dr. Lazarus grudgingly respects O'Niel's single-minded code of honor and dedication to duty, she is afraid to join him as an ally.

Carol O'Niel is the marshal's young wife, who can no longer stand the isolation of bleak frontier assignments. Just when her husband needs her support the most, she boards the monthly space shuttle for Earth. She takes along their eleven-year-old son, so that the child can grow and play with friends his own age—away from the solitary, dangerous Outland way of life.

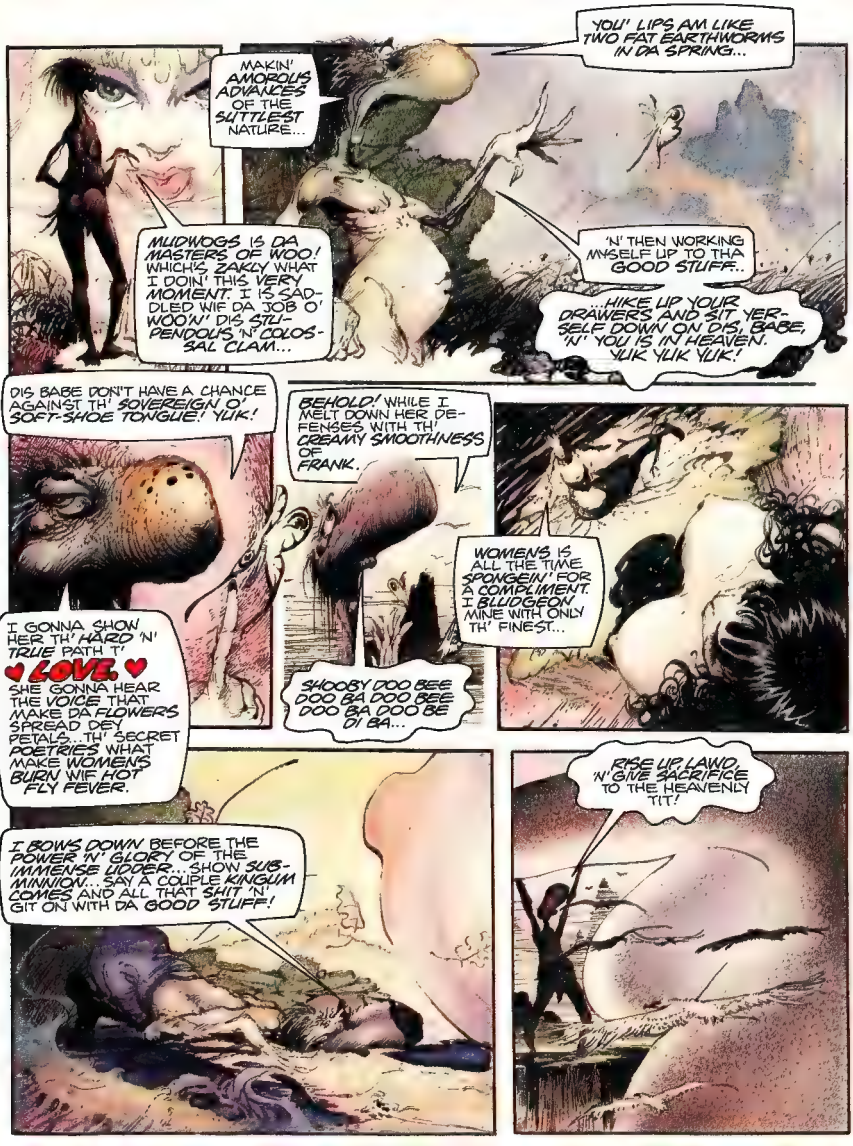


Marshal O'Niel's investigations soon reveal that the mortality rate on Io is higher than anyone has ever admitted—let alone questioned. The corporation is annoyed by the lawman's inquiries: they try bribery, then threats, to stop him. Faced with betrayal by his own security force, and unable to trust anyone in the mining colony, O'Niel refuses to back down. Determined to carry out his job, he continues to probe for Io's deadly secrets, knowing that the hunter has now become the hunted. Before he can reach the authorities, he must face the most murderous conflict of his career. Alone and trapped in the maze-like Con-Am complex, Marshal William T. O'Niel comes to realize that even in space, the ultimate enemy is man.

Outland is adapted and illustrated by award-winning author and artist Steranko. Based on the science-fiction thriller film written and directed by Peter Hyams, the graphic story version of **Outland** will be presented in four full-color installments, each eleven pages in length, beginning in the next issue of **Heavy Metal**. **Outland** will showcase Steranko's first comics work since his highly acclaimed Nick Fury and Captain America series for Marvel in the late 1960s. The style and format used in this adaptation are highly experimental, and designed specifically to complement the story.
Outland is a Ladd Company Production, released through Warner Bros.

MUDWOGS

by ARTHUR SUYDAM


YOU' LIPS AM LIKE TWO FAT EARTHWORMS IN DA SPRING...
MAKIN' AMOROUS ADVANCES OF THE SLITTIEST NATURE...
MUDWOGS IS DA MASTERS OF WOO! WHICH'S, ZAKLY WHAT I DOIN' THIS VERY MOMENT. I IS SADDLED WIF DA JOB O' WOO'N'! DIS STUPENDOUS 'N' COLOSSAL CLAM...
'N' THEN WORKING MYSELF UP TO THA GOOD STUFF...
HIKE UP YOUR DRAWERS AND SIT YERSELF DOWN ON DIS, BABE. 'N' YOU IS IN HEAVEN. YUK YUK YUK!
DIS BABE DON'T HAVE A CHANCE AGAINST TH' SOVEREIGN O' SOFT-SHOE TONGUE! YUK!
BEHOLD! WHILE I MELT DOWN HER DEFENSES WITH TH' CREAMY SMOOTHNESS OF FRANK.
WOMENS IS ALL THE TIME SPONGEIN' FOR A COMPLIMENT. I BUDGEON MINE WITH ONLY TH' FINEST...
I GONNA SHOW HER TH' HARD 'N' TRUE PATH T' LOVE. SHE GONNA HEAR THE VOICE THAT MAKE DA FLOWERS SPREAD DEY PETALS...TH' SECRET POETRIES WHAT MAKE WOMENS BURN WIF HOT FLY FEVER.
SHOOBY DOO BEE DOO BA DOO BEE DOO BA DOO BE DI BA...
I BOWS DOWN BEFORE THE POWER 'N' GLORY OF THE IMMENSE UDDER...SHOW SUBMINNION.. SAY A COUPLE KINGUM COMES AND ALL THAT SHIT 'N' GIT ON WITH DA GOOD STUFF!
RISE UP LAWD, 'N' GIVE SACRIFICE TO THE HEAVENLY TIT!

...BY TWISTIN' DA HEAD OFF DIS DUCK...
C'MERE, BIRD.
AWK!
>COUGH!< WHIP WHIMPERING WILLS, SOFT, SING BLOODY SONGS OF BIRDBATH, AS WE RAP, TAPPING IN END-LESS IN-OUT, IN-OUT... >HACK!<
DON'T FIGHT IT, BABE; THA PROFIDER O' PASSION IS BRINGIN' HOME DA RED 'N' SALTY BACON!
>COUGH!/HACK!< CRUSH ME AND MUSH ME INTO YOUR >COUGH!< INTO YOUR WIGWAM OF WANTON WUFF, YOU SIZZLING, SCINTILLAT-ING, SUCK-WUCK >COUGH!< HACK! COUGH!<
WHY DON'T... >WHEEEEEEZ<
LOVE WREAKS HAVOC ON DA LEG BONES!
END.

EARLY IN THE 21 CENTURY, IN A MINING COLONY ON THE SECOND MOON OF JUPITER. "SOMEONE IS GETTING AWAY WITH MURDER."

OUTLAND

SPECTACULARLY RECREATED IN **THE MOVIE NOVEL**™

OUTLAND: EVEN IN SPACE, THE ULTIMATE ENEMY IS MAN.

Io, innermost moon of Jupiter... An unforgiving world, a hellhole in space that broils by day and freezes by night under the malignant eye of the Great Red Spot... An outland of the space-age frontier where men mine ore for the needs of Earth.

Like the men of the old frontier, the miners of Con-Am 27 are hard men, loners who work and play at a brutal pace. But now, frenzied by some sinister force, they are killing one another and themselves...

To the outland of Io comes a new marshal, a man driven by honor and haunted by failure. A man who will stand alone and forfeit, if he must, love, livelihood, and even life itself, to confront and conquer the evil that is engulfing Io.

And so, as it did in Dodge City centuries ago, a classic showdown develops...

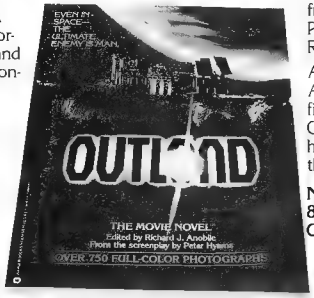
OUTLAND: A Sensational $12 Million Film is produced by the Ladd Company, whose executives masterminded the production and extraordinary success of ALIEN and STAR WARS.

The film stars Sean Connery and Peter Boyle, and is both written and directed by Peter Hyams, who lists among his other credits as writer/director "Capricorn One," "Hanover Street," and "Busting." It is produced for the Ladd Company by Richard A. Roth, producer of "Summer of '42."

OUTLAND boasts some of the most spectacular and sophisticated special effects ever to appear on the screen. It is filmed in Introvision, an exciting new technique of electronic matting that projects actors onto miniature sets with superrealism. The set of the Jovian mining colony took 80 workers more than three months to complete, and has been described by the *Los Angeles Times* as "mesmerizing."

OUTLAND: A Spectacular Movie Novel From the Editor of the Bestselling "Alien" Movie Novel.
Combining the stunning visuals of the movie with the riveting storyline of the novel, this original Warner trade paperback recreates the total OUTLAND experience with more than 1,000 full-color photos from the movie, edited from the Peter Hyams script and narrated by Richard J. Anobile.

Anobile's earlier movie novel of ALIEN became a classic in the field. Now his movie novel of OUTLAND is positioned to surpass his first great success, tieing in with the science-fiction event of 1981.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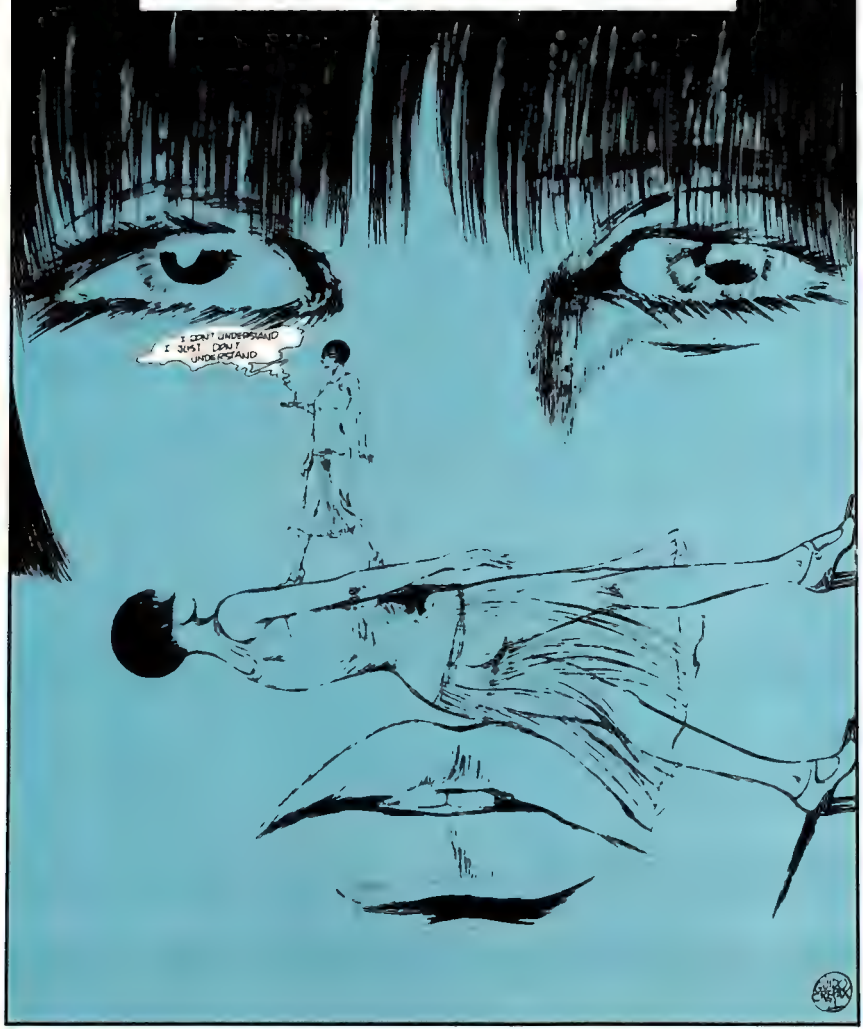
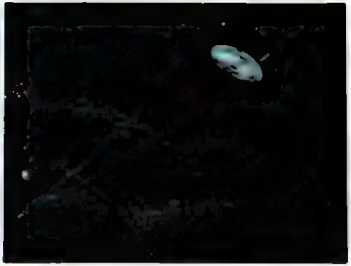
Valentina REFLECTION

Haunted by her spaceman-lover, Valentina finds it difficult to work, play, or sleep. In a dream, she sees herself, clad in an identical space suit, making love with him and becomes anxious to find out who he really is. Oh dear.

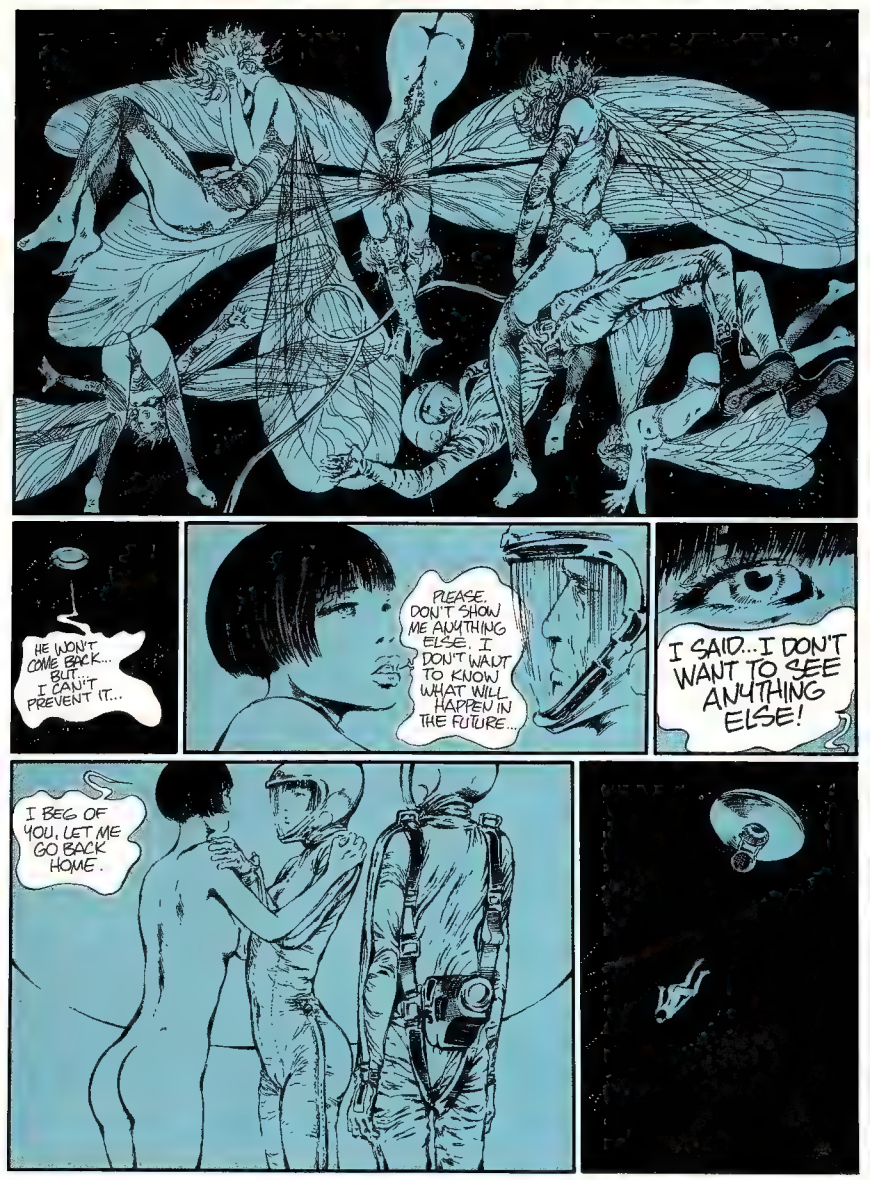


I SLEPT BUT FOR HOW LONG? I CAN'T UNDERSTAND
IF I'VE ENTERED ANOTHER DIMENSION
BUT SO TIME IS TICK-ING AWAY IN SUCH A STRANGE WAY I WONDER IF SHE NEEDS ANY HELP
AHAAAH! AH...
NO NO IT'S THE WAY I USED TO TELL TIME. BUT IT NO LONGER HAS ANY VALUE TO ME
THEY PUT THEM IN AN INCUBATOR IMMEDIATELY THE CHILDREN GROW OUT IN AN INCUBATOR FED BY OSMOSIS!

MY GOD! HOW QUICKLY YOU GREW!
AND ME, I'M OLD... I'M OLD LIKE...



HERE THEY ARE!.. I KNEW THAT THEY'D COME...
THEY'RE HAMMERING AGAINST THE WINDOWS...THEY'RE CALLING YOU.. BUT I DON'T WANT..
NOOOOOo....


HE WON'T COME BACK... BUT... I CAN'T PREVENT IT...
PLEASE, DON'T SHOW ME ANYTHING ELSE. I DON'T WANT TO KNOW WHAT WILL HAPPEN IN THE FUTURE...
I SAID... I DON'T WANT TO SEE ANYTHING ELSE!
I BEG OF YOU, LET ME GO BACK HOME.

MOTHER...

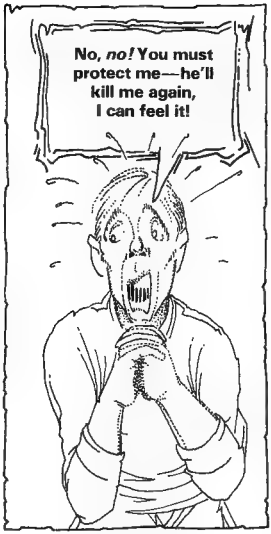
MOTHER!..
I FELL OUT OF BED JUST LIKE A LITTLE GIRL...
AHAHAH! MOTHER!
OH! MAMMA!
HE WANTED TO EAT YOU UP, BUT I KILLED HIM! DON'T WORRY!
IT WAS JUST A DREAM. WHY YOU'RE COVERED WITH SWEAT!
HOW HEAVY YOU FEEL! BUT YOU'RE JUST A LITTLE GUY!
I'M COMING!
THERE WAS A DRAGON WHO WANTED TO EAT YOU!
I'M HERE BABY
THERE, NOW SLEEP IT'S VERY LATE...
TO CATCH A BREEZE ON THE TERRACE...
HMM... THIS HEAT! I DON'T EVEN WANT TO GET DRESSED...
I'D LIKE TO GO OUTSIDE FOR A BIT..

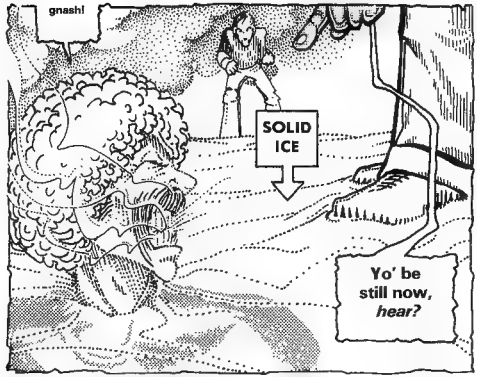
THE IVY LEAVES HAVE ALL BROKEN AS IF
WHAT HEAT... HEAT... HMMM... HMMMMM...
AAHAHH...
THE END.

Changes

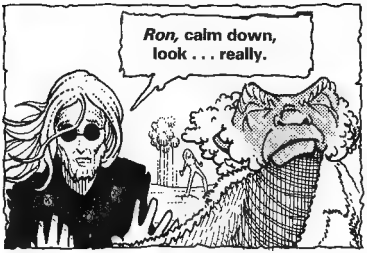
Matt Howarth

initiation



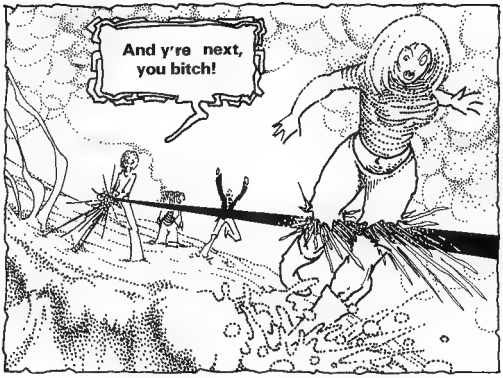


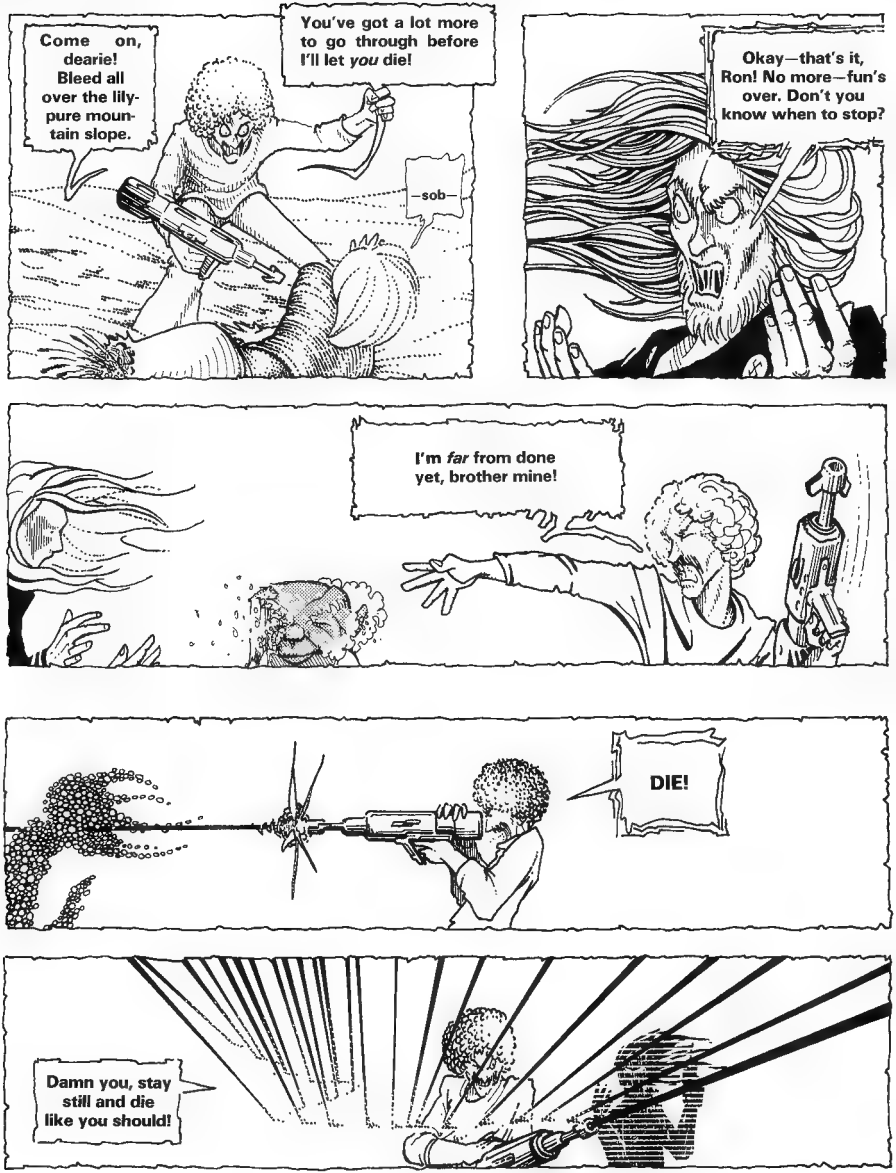
Please—


Ron, calm down, look . . . really.

Die, die, *die!*

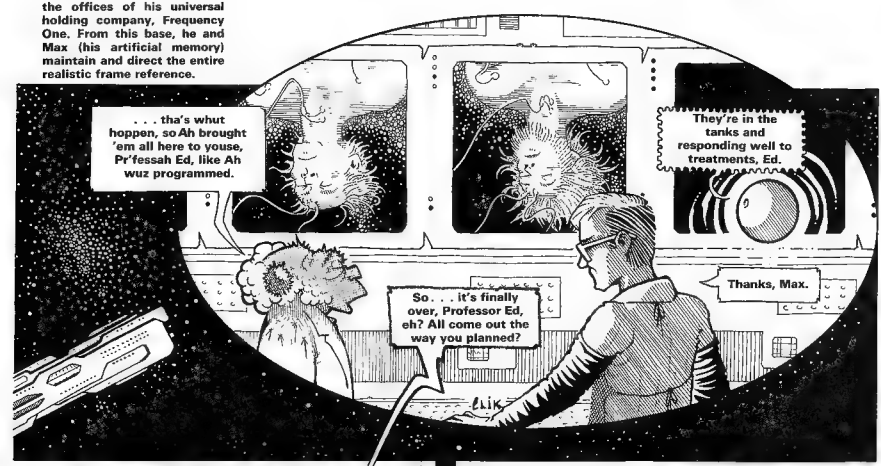
And with *him* out of the way—it stays *this* way!

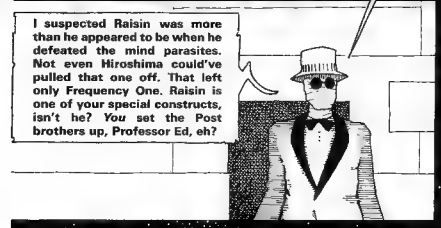

And y're next, you bitch!


Come on, dearie! Bleed all over the lily-pure mountain slope.
You've got a lot more to go through before I'll let *you* die!
–sob–
Okay—that's it, Ron! No more—fun's over. Don't you know when to stop?
I'm *far* from done yet, brother mine!
DIE!
Damn you, stay still and die like you should!

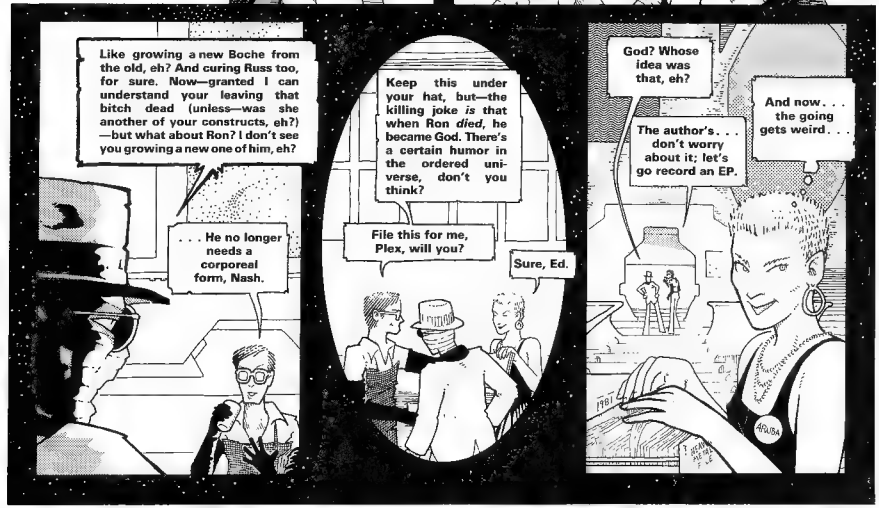
No!
VAPORIZE
Ron?
What— what...
AND HE CRACKS. ANYTHING RUSS MAY'VE GAINED FROM THE R'LYEH IS LOST NOW.
This is the ending?
Mooo!

Deep within the Canes Venatici, Professor Ed has hidden the offices of his universal holding company, Frequency One. From this base, he and Max (his artificial memory) maintain and direct the entire realistic frame reference.

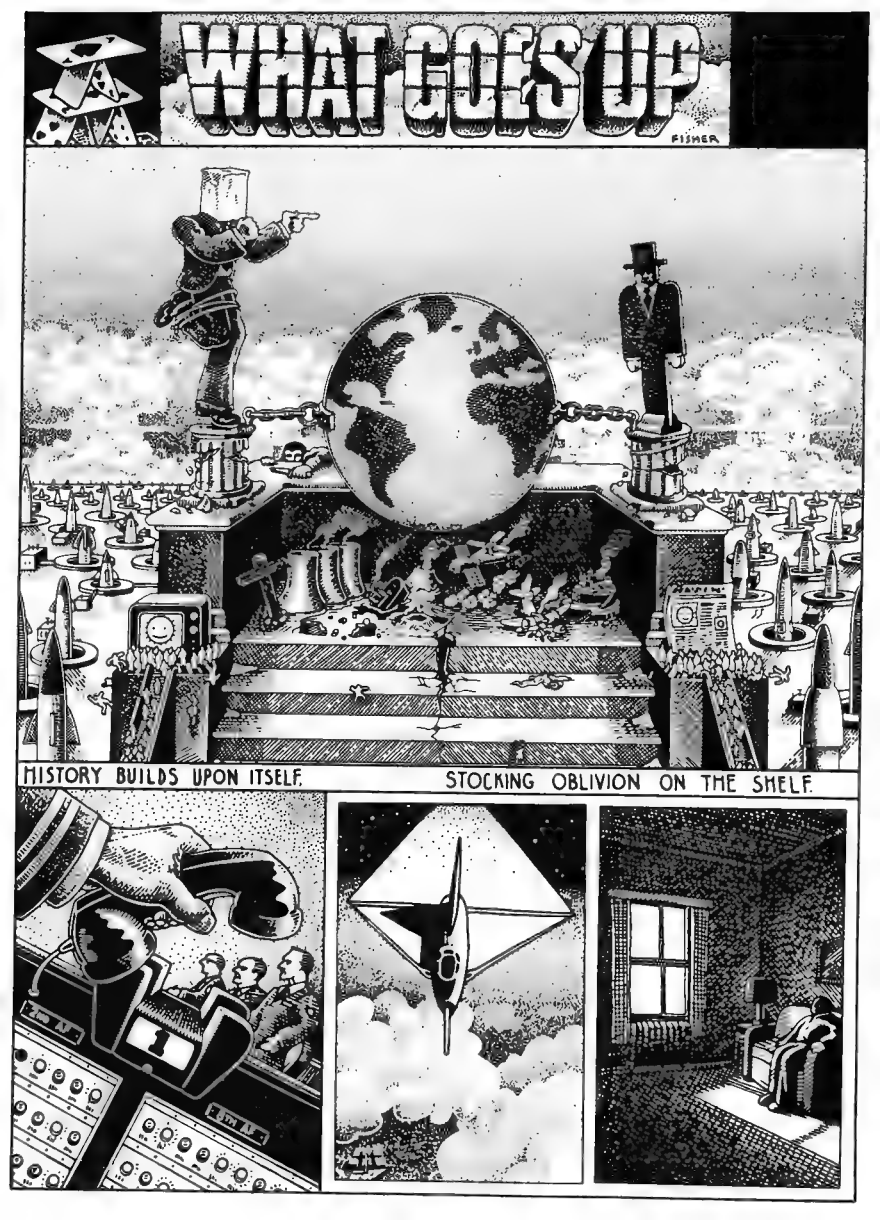

. . . tha's whut happen, so Ah brought 'em all here to youse, Pr'fessah Ed, like Ah wuz programmed.
They're in the tanks and responding well to treatments, Ed.
Thanks, Max.
So . . . it's finally over, Professor Ed, eh? All come out the way you planned?
flik

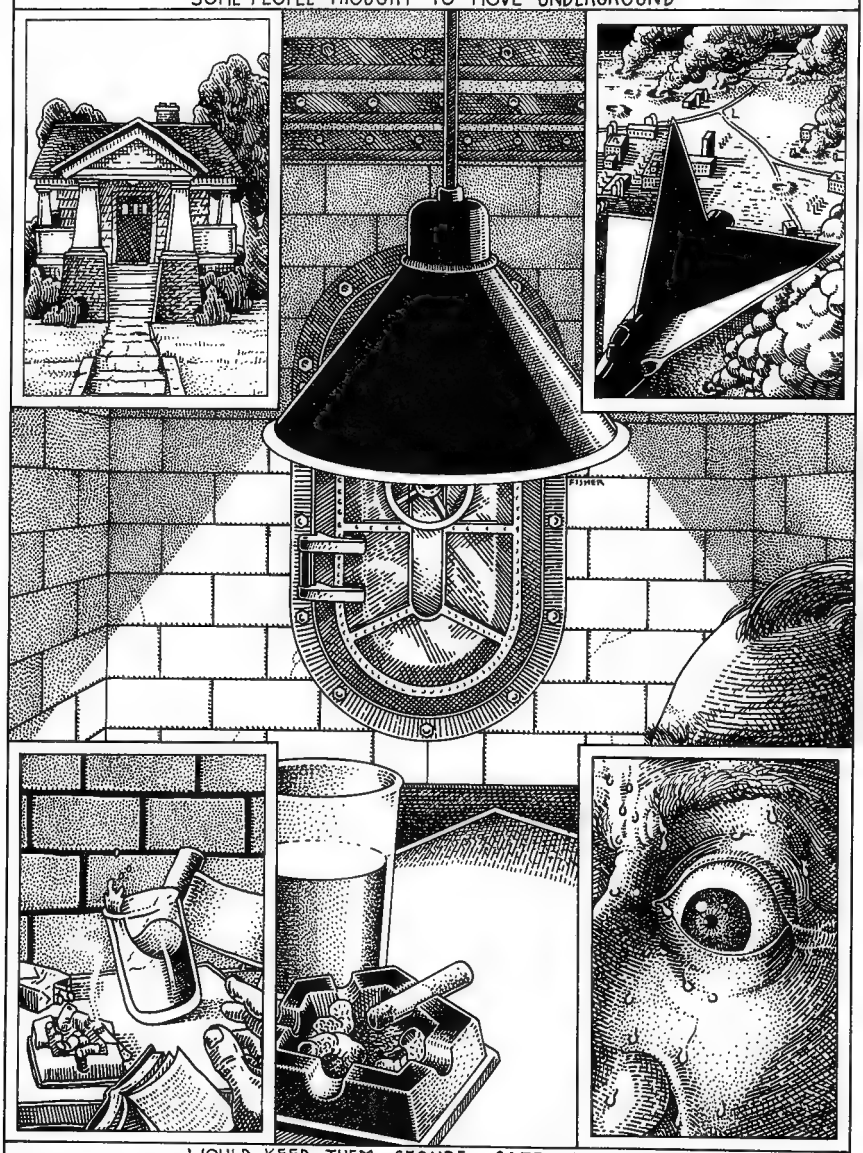

I suspected Raisin was more than he appeared to be when he defeated the mind parasites. Not even Hiroshima could've pulled that one off. That left only Frequency One. Raisin is one of your special constructs, isn't he? *You* set the Post brothers up, Professor Ed, eh?

It's hardly as melodramatic as that, Nash.
Like rescuing the Caroline that Boche stranded on Freedkin.
Events took their natural course. I arranged nothing — I only protected the bystanders.

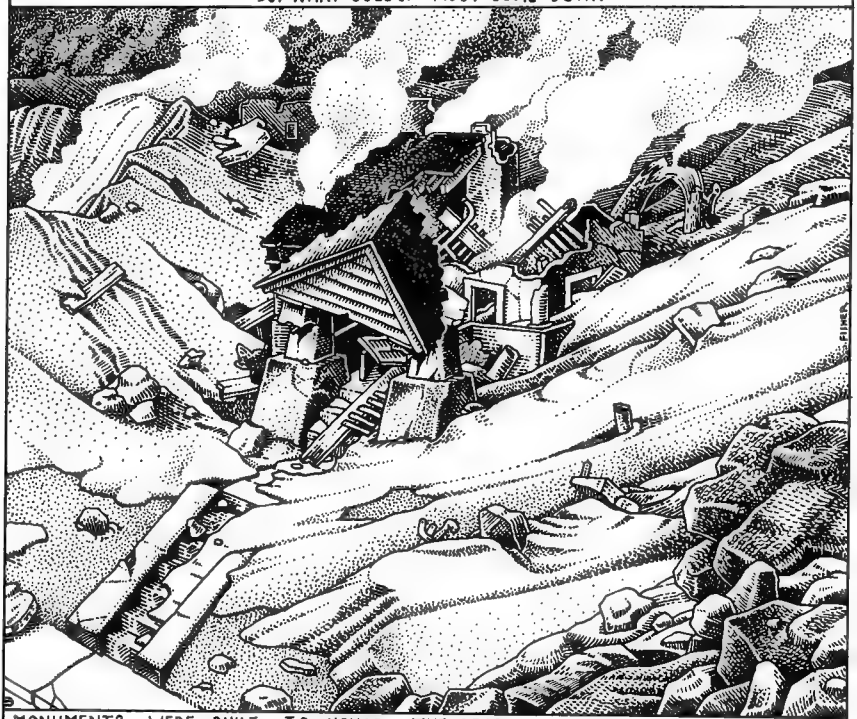

Like growing a new Boche from the old, eh? And curing Russ too, for sure. Now—granted I can understand your leaving that bitch dead (unless—was she another of your constructs, eh?) —but what about Ron? I don't see you growing a new one of him, eh?
. . . He no longer needs a corporeal form, Nash.
Keep this under your hat, but—the killing joke *is* that when Ron *died*, he became God. There's a certain humor in the ordered universe, don't you think?
File this for me, Plex, will you?
Sure, Ed.
God? Whose idea was that, eh?
The author's. . . don't worry about it; let's go record an EP.
And now. . . the going gets weird. . .
1981
AROUSA

end file: the end

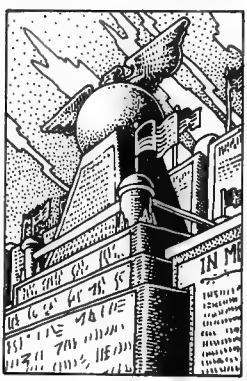

WHAT GOES UP
FISHER
HISTORY BUILDS UPON ITSELF.
STOCKING OBLIVION ON THE SHELF.


SOME PEOPLE THOUGHT TO MOVE UNDERGROUND
FISHER
WOULD KEEP THEM SECURE, SAFE, AND SOUND.

BUT WHAT GOES UP MUST COME DOWN.



MONUMENTS WERE BUILT TO HONOR THE DEAD.



PLATITUDES, ATTITUDES, NOT ENOUGH COULD BE SAID.

A MILLION YEARS LATER, EXHUMED FROM THE GROUND,

PROOF... THAT WHAT GOES UP MUST COME DOWN.

"My men wear HEAVY METAL t-shirts, or they wear nothing at all."

"You're not whistling 'Dixie,' little lady! We only wear the finest form-fitting material, which I feel accentuates my manly physique. Ray here likes the way the colors blend with his ruddy complexion. No matter what you look like, the HEAVY METAL t-shirt (available in red or black) is the message for summer."

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Black Small ☐ Medium ☐ Large ☐
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Enclosed please find my check or money order. Please send me _____ HEAVY METAL t-shirt(s) at $6.00 (plus 60¢ per shirt for postage and handling).

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If you do wish to order, but do not wish to cut the coupon in this ad, please print or type all the necessary info, and enclose it with a check or money order.

Please note: t-shirt depicts only Heavy Metal logo. The illustration above is not used on the actual shirt. Too many curves.

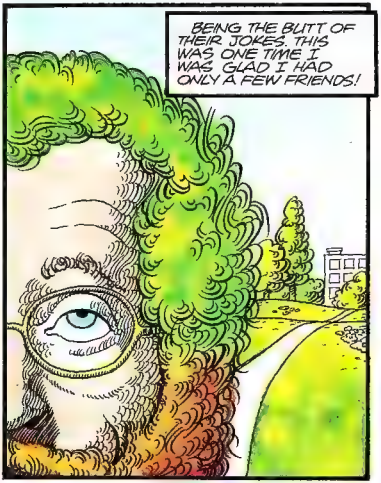
MARCH HAIR

BY CAZA

FOR A LONG TIME, I HAD A CREW CUT AND A SHORT BEARD. THAT GAVE ME A RATHER STARK LOOK, WHICH BLENDED IN JUST FINE WITH MY STYLE AT THE TIME. ONE COLD, WINTRY DAY I DECIDED TO LET MY HAIR GROW, MERELY TO SEE WHAT KIND OF LOOK IT WOULD GIVE ME.

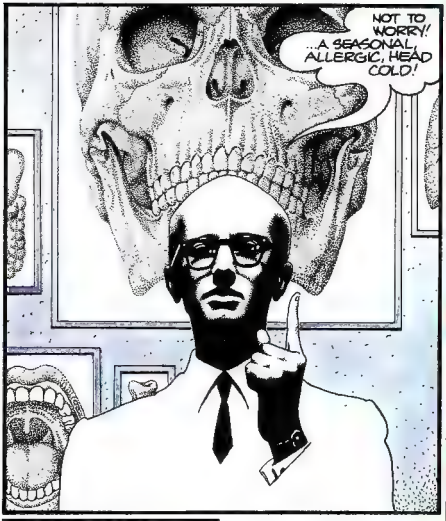
AT THE END OF THE SEASON, MY HAIR STARTED TO TAKE ON AN INTERESTING TONE. MOREOVER, I HAD SAVED QUITE A BIT BY NOT GOING TO THE BARBERSHOP ANYMORE — SO MUCH THAT, IN FACT, I DECIDED TO KEEP IT UP.

IT WAS THEN THAT MY HAIR STARTED TO TURN GREEN. AT FIRST, I DIDN'T GET TOO WORKED UP ABOUT IT... BUT, LITTLE BY LITTLE, THE GREEN GREW OUT FROM THE ROOTS, AND BY MID APRIL I WAS BOASTING A MAGNIFICENT MOP OF LUSH, BEAUTIFUL GREEN GRASS. AND, IN HARMONY WITH THE SPRING, NO LESS! MY BEARD STAYED ITS USUAL COLOR, REDDISH BROWN. AESTHETICALLY, I FOUND THAT PRETTY NEAT. YET, ON THE OTHER HAND, THE REACTIONS OF MY FRIENDS WERE NOT GOOD. IT BECAME TIRESOME...



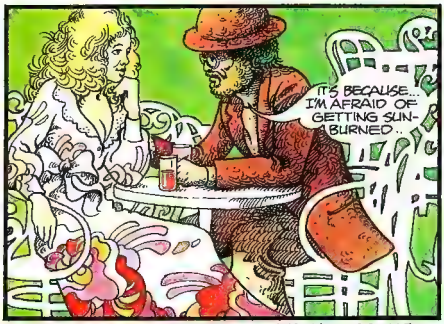
I TRIED TONS OF SHAMPOOS, BUT THERE WAS NOTHING I COULD DO! ON THE CONTRARY, SUCCESSIVE WASHINGS SEEMED TO GIVE IT MORE LIFE! MOTHER NATURE WAS HAVING A FIELD DAY! SO I TRIED TO KEEP TO MYSELF...

AROUND THE MIDDLE OF MAY I BEGAN TO SPROUT LITTLE BUDS, WHICH QUICKLY OPENED INTO DELICATE COROLLAS, A PASTEL ROSE-COLORED FLOWER. THEIR SWEET PERFUME FOLLOWED ME EVERYWHERE. I SPENT HOURS IN FRONT OF THE MIRROR, SATISFYING MY NARCISSISTIC FANTASIES. I WOULD HAVE BEEN PERFECTLY HAPPY IF I HADN'T BEEN OVERTAKEN BY SNEEZING FITS. SIMULTANEOUSLY, MY NOSE RAN LIKE A FOUNTAIN, AND MY EYES TEARED. BUT I HAD NO FEVER. I DECIDED TO SEE A DOCTOR. HIS DIAGNOSIS WAS VERY CLEAR...

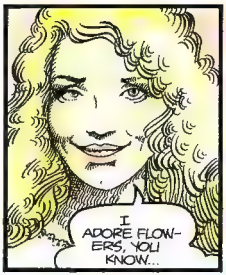


...HAY FEVER, IN OTHER WORDS, (I'M SIMPLIFYING THIS FOR THE READER WHO'S NOT USED TO MEDICAL JARGON.) HE GAVE ME SOME MEDICINE TO TAKE AND ADDED:

BUT SINCE THE MEDICINE CLEARED UP THE COLD, I DIDN'T CUT ANYTHING AT ALL! I BEGAN TO GET ATTACHED TO IT. I WAS PROUD OF MY BLOOMING COIF! WHEN SUMMER CAME, I STOPPED TAKING MY MEDICINE. THE SEASON OF MY ALLERGIES HAD PASSED. MY LITTLE FLOWERS CONTINUED TO THRIVE. EVERY MORNING, I WATERED THEM GENEROUSLY. WHEN EVENING CAME, THEY WISELY CLOSED THEMSELVES UP. I WAS A LITTLE AFRAID OF CRUSHING THEM ON MY PILLOW WHILE I SLEPT...

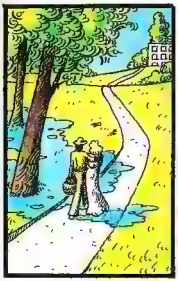


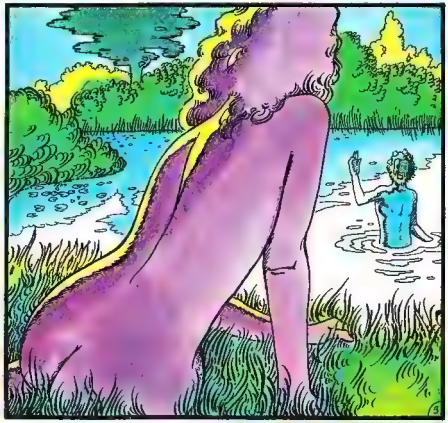
IT WAS AT THIS TIME THAT MARGUERITE ENTERED MY LIFE. AT THE BEGINNING SHE WAS A BIT ASTONISHED BY MY PERPETUAL HAT. BUT I WAS SO AFRAID THAT SHE WOULD MAKE FUN OF MY HEAD OF HAIR! IN FACT, ONE NEVER KNOWS WHAT THE REACTION OF A WOMAN WHO WEARS COUNTRY DRESSES AND HAS A MANE OF BLOND HAIR WILL BE.



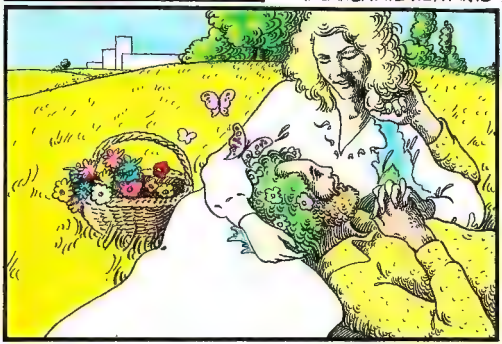
I HAD TO TAKE MY HAT OFF WHEN SHE CAME TO MY HOUSE TO SEE MY CARTOON COLLECTION. IT WAS IMPERATIVE; FLOWERS NEED LIGHT, YOU KNOW.

BUT MY FEARS WERE IN VAIN. SHE WAS ABSOLUTELY DELIGHTED! THE NEXT DAY, SHE MOVED IN, WITH HER COUNTRY DRESSES, TWO CANARIES, AN ANGORA CAT, AND ALL OF PINK FLOYD'S RECORDS.

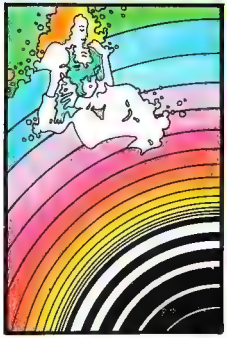




FOR A FEW WEEKS, WE WERE AS HAPPY AS LARKS. ALL THE NEIGHBORS HAD GONE ON VACATION. WE WENT INTO THE FORESTS, TO WALK THE CANARIES, WE BATHED IN A LITTLE LAKE THAT I'D DISCOVERED, AND WE STAYED FOR HOURS, FLIRTING WITH EACH OTHER WHILE BUTTERFLIES AND BEES CAME TO POLLINATE AROUND MY HEAD...AT NIGHT WE LISTENED TO RECORDS AND



REMINDED EACH OTHER OF HOW GOOD IT WOULD BE WHEN WE'D HAVE A VINE-COVERED COTTAGE, WITH A LARGE FIREPLACE...



...AND A GARDEN FILLED WITH FLOWERS.

OBVIOUSLY, WITH ALL THAT, I NEEDED A FULL-TIME JOB! NOW THERE WERE TWO MOUTHS TO FEED. UNFORTUNATELY, MARGUERITE'S BASKET WEAVING DIDN'T PROVIDE US WITH A STEADY INCOME

LOOK AT YOU! YOU'LL SCARE OUR CLIENTS AWAY! MAYBE YOU SHOULD BECOME A LAWN DOCTOR!

I DRESSED WELL, BUT THE MOMENT I TOOK OFF MY HAT, SLAM! AND I ARGUED, BOY, DID I ARGUE! "THIS IS NOT HAIRSTYLES OR IT MATTER ANYMORE!" IT WAS ALL IN VAIN! FOR, I WAS TREATED LIKE A CLOWN, A HIPPIE, AND—THE LOWEST BLOW—A POET! I BEGAN TO DESPAIR. THEN, THE ARRIVAL OF AUTUMN RESOLVED THE PROBLEM: THE FLOWERS FELL, THE SPROUTS TURNED BROWN, AND I TOOK ON A FAIRLY NORMAL LOOK AGAIN. PERHAPS FINALLY I WAS GOING TO FIND SOME WORK...

Marguerite!

AND I DID! WHEN I WENT BACK HOME TO TELL MARGUERITE THE GOOD NEWS, I FOUND THE HOUSE EMPTY. NO MORE CANARIES, NO MORE ANGORA CAT, NO MORE MARGUERITE. SHE HAD LEFT ONLY A NOTE ATTACHED TO OUR FAVORITE PINK FLOYD ALBUM. SEEMS THAT WHAT SHE LIKED MOST ABOUT ME HAD BEEN THE FLOWERS IN MY HAIR AND YOU KNOW, I DON'T REALLY MISS HER. WHO CAN BE SERIOUS ABOUT A GIRL WHO GETS ATTACHED TO LITTLE DETAILS LIKE THAT? ALL OF A SUDDEN, I FELT RELIEVED. I NO LONGER NEEDED WORK AS BADLY. ESPECIALLY BECAUSE, THIS MORNING...

...BROWN TUBERS BEGAN TO SPROUT IN MY BEARD! I BELIEVE THEY ARE POTATOES! I'LL BE ABLE TO EAT THEM ALL WINTER LONG

CAZA

END

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COLLECTOR'S ITEMS

#1/APRIL 1977: Sorry — SOLD OUT!

#2/MAY 1977: Russian astronauts, 'Roger" the paranoid puppet, "Conquering Armies, ' the ultimate rock festival, and more ($4 00)

#3/JUNE 1977: Macedo's "Rockblitz, ' the highly praised "Shells," the beginning of Davis's "World Apart, Moebius, Corben, Bodé more ($3 00)

#4/JULY 1977: Lots of Moebius' 'Arzach," plus part one of ' The Long Tomorrow", also the final installment of "Sunpot " ($3 00)

#5/AUGUST 1977: The saga of 'Polonius" begins, ' The Long Tomorrow" concludes, and "World Apart" and ' Den ' continue ($3 00)

#6/SEPTEMBER 1977: Roger Zelazny has a short story and Moebius, a space opera, plus more "World Apart." 'Den, and "Polonius." ($3 00)

#7/OCTOBER 1977: Fiction by Theodore Sturgeon, Moebius's ' Airtight Garage," "Den" and "Polonius" back again, yet more ($3.00)

#8/NOVEMBER 1977: New Harlan Ellison fiction, nine color pages by Moebius and Rimbaud, conclusions for "Polonius" and "World Apart." ($3 00)

#9/DECEMBER 1977: Extra pages for the complete "Vuzz" by Druillet, "Fortune's Fool" by Chaykin and Wein, plus full-color contributions from Corben, Macedo, Clavelioux, and Moebius ($3 00)

#10/JANUARY 1978: Morrow illustrates Zelazny, Lob and Pichard update *Ulysses*, "Conquering Armies" concludes, "Den" continues ($3 00)

#11/FEBRUARY 1978: New adventures of "Barbarella," wraparound cover and center spread by Nino, plus Moebius, Corben, et al. ($3 00)

#12/MARCH 1978: Swashbuckling "Orion" makes a debut courtesy of Gray Morrow; and there's more "Barbarella," more "Urm," and yet more "Den." ($3 00)

#13/APRIL 1978: Our first anniversary issue! A thirty-page insert from "Paradise 9," and "Barbarella" gives birth, while "Den" wraps it up ($3 00)

#14/MAY 1978: "Urm the Mad" waves bye-bye, but "Orion" and "Barbarella" continue, and Alex Nino tips his hat ($3 00)

#15/JUNE 1978: Corben introduces Shahrazad Sturgeon s classic "More Than Human" is illustrated, more "Barbarella," and the origins of "Heilman " ($3.00)

#16/JULY 1978: A happy ending for "Barbarella," a sad ending for "1996," the resumption of Druillet's "Gail " and yet more "Heilman," "Orion," "More Than Human," and Corben's "Arabian Nights." ($3 00)

#17/AUGUST 1978: Sorry — SOLD OUT!

#18/SEPTEMBER 1978: Corben's ' Sindbad," Moebius's Major, "Heilman," "Orion," "Lone Sloane on Gail," and Harlan Ellison too ($3 00)

#19/OCTOBER 1978: "Exterminator 17," Ellison's illustrated 'Glass Goblin," the debut of McKie's "So Beautiful and So Dangerous," plus the usual ($3 00)

#20/NOVEMBER 1978: Twenty pages of the Delany/Chaykin "Empire, more "Sindbad," "Exterminator ' Major Grubert, "Heilman" 's final rebirth more ($3.00)

#21/DECEMBER 1978: The stocking's full with "Orion," Kirchner s "Tarot," and twelve beautiful pages of Moebius ($3 00)

#22/JANUARY 1979: Trina makes her debut here, and Druillet concludes 'Gail," plus McKie and Corben How much can you take? ($3.00)

#23/FEBRUARY 1979: "Galactic Geographic," ' Starcrown," Corben's "Sindbad," McKie's "So Beautiful and So Dangerous," plus Moebius, Bilal, and Macedo ($3 00)

#24/MARCH 1979: Twenty pages of Chaykin illustrating Bester's "The Stars My Destination," "Starcrown" II, and Ellison's late show ($3 00)

#25/APRIL 1979: Our second birthday bash, with Chaykin and Wein's "Gideon Faust," the "Alien" portfolio, and Val Mayerik's "Time Out " And much more ($3.00)

#26/MAY 1979: It's all-American (except for Druillet's "Danoin " and a Proust joke): fifteen entries including Corben, Morrow, the illustrated "Alien " ($3 00)

#27/JUNE 1979: Fifty-four pages of "Captain Future," plus more illustrated "Alien," and the final episode of "So Beautiful and So Dangerous " ($3 00)

#28/JULY 1979: Bodé's "Zooks" premieres, Corben's "Sindbad" concludes, Morrow and Moebius continue, Mike Hinge debuts ($3.00)

#29/AUGUST 1979: Caza steals the show with "New Ark City," plus Mayerik, Suydam, "Galactic Geographic," Bodé, more. ($3.00)

#30/SEPTEMBER 1979: "Elric," "Buck Rogers," a lizard named "Elvis," and 'Little Red V-3," alongside Montellier and Moebius ($3.00)

#31/OCTOBER 1979: Halloween strikes with a tribute to H P Lovecraft, with Moebius, Breccia, Druillet, Suydam, others. ($3.00)

#32/NOVEMBER 1979: Let us give thanks for Corben's "Rowlf," Bode's "Zooks," Brunner's "Elric," Chaykin's "The Stars My Destination," Moebius, and more ($3 00)

#33/DECEMBER 1979: A Christmas package from Caza, Corben, Kofoed, Suydam, Stiles, Trina, Moebius, and Ellison, plus "Gnomes" and "Giants." ($3.00)

#34/JANUARY 1980: A new year — *a new decade* — begins with a new look for *HM* with the debut of four new columnists, new artists Neal McPheeters and Dan Steffan, the conclusion of Corben's "Rowlf," and much more! ($3 00)

#35/FEBRUARY 1980: An eerie Couratin cover adorns this winter issue Corben's "The Beast of Wolfton" begins McKie experiments with the Air Pump, and we join Matt Howarth on a crazed acid trip ($3 00)

#36/MARCH 1980: Why did "The Crevasse" take Jeannette? For the answer read the Schuiten Bros strip! Plus, Corben Matena, Moebius and Lee Marrs's "Good Vibrations " ($3 00)

#37/APRIL 1980: Our third anniversary issue — 32 pages of "Champakou" in living color, the final installment of Moebius's "Airtight Garage," plus Caza, Bilal, Howarth, Corben, Bode — and more! ($3 00)

#38/MAY 1980: Does the Supreme Alchemist exist? Will Axle ever find out? Will "Champakou' reach the Doll of Jade? Will Joe strike out with the alien Marilyn, too? Take a look We'll never tell. ($3 00)

#39/JUNE 1980: "Champakou" meets his fate, while "Captain Sternn" saves the day. And in their revenge, the Flying Wallendas vs. the Earth! ($3 00)

#40/JULY 1980: "The Alchemist Supreme" continues with Axle learning the truth about his sidekick Musky Bilal's "Progress!" begins, and Moebius returns with "Shore Leave " ($3 00)

#41/AUGUST 1980: Druillet returns with the first installment of "Salammbo' while Moebius concludes "Shore Leave" (and is interviewed) Bilal continues "Progress!" ($3.00)

#42/SEPTEMBER 1980: "The Alchemist Supreme" concludes while Bilal's "Progress!" picks up steam Ernie Colon, Paul Kirchner, and Leo Duranona all contribute nifty shorts, while "Rock Opera" gets stranger yet ($3.00)

#43/OCTOBER 1980: Our Special Rock Issue, packed with goodies by McKie, Moebius, Voss, Spain, Druillet, Yeates, He, Howarth, Kierkegaard, Jr , Colon, and Matena, and not to be missed! ($3 00)

#44/NOVEMBER 1980: With the *Shogun* spirit ablaze, this issue's cover, by Hajime Sorayama, is definitely in its element Inside we give you some lovely Clavelioux, Moebius, Kaluta, Springett, and Bilal ($3 00)

#45/DECEMBER 1980: Premiering Corben's illustrated "Bloodstar," Crepax's "Valentina," and Godard and Ribera's "What Is Reality, Papa?" Plus "The Cutter of the Fog," "Rock Opera," and Moebius! ($3 00)

#46/JANUARY 1981: Jeronaton returns with "Woman " Don Wood makes his *HM* debut with "Bang, Hah." Plus more Corben, Godard and Ribera, Mezieres, and "Rock Opera " Moebius tells us "There Is a Prince Charming on Phenixon!" Don t miss it! ($3 00)

Collage by **Larry Lanoff**

#47/FEBRUARY 1981: William S. Burroughs discusses "Civilian Defense," while Rick Veitch shares with us his experiences at this year's Lucca fest. "The Horny Goof," an inimitable Moebius character, gets himself in and outta trouble, while "Bloodstar," "What Is Reality, Papa?" "Salammbo," and "Rock Opera" continue. Plus: Special added attraction! Pages from Jeff Jones's new book, *Yesterday's Lily*, and an interview with the man himself. Ah Magic. ($3.00)

#48/MARCH 1981: "Tex Arcana," John Findley's epic Western, begins. "What Is Reality, Papa?" and "The Ambassador of the Shadows" continue. And Druillet's interpretation of Flaubert's classic *Salammbo* comes to an end. Even with all of that going on, we still have room for Kierkegaard, Howarth, and Corben's "Bloodstar." Plus, Harlan Ellison's ever timely essay on violence in America. ($3.00)

#49/APRIL 1981: "Art and the Nazis," Corben's "Bloodstar," Gimenez's "Good-bye, Soldier!," Harry North's "Stories from London," and an interview with Julio Ribera. Di'n't think we could do it in one shot, did ya? ($3.00)

#50/MAY 1981: The premieres of Chaykin's "Cody Starbuck" and Bilal's "The Immortals' Fete"! Plus, Suydam's "The Toll Bridge" and a William S. Burroughs piece on immortality. ($3.00)

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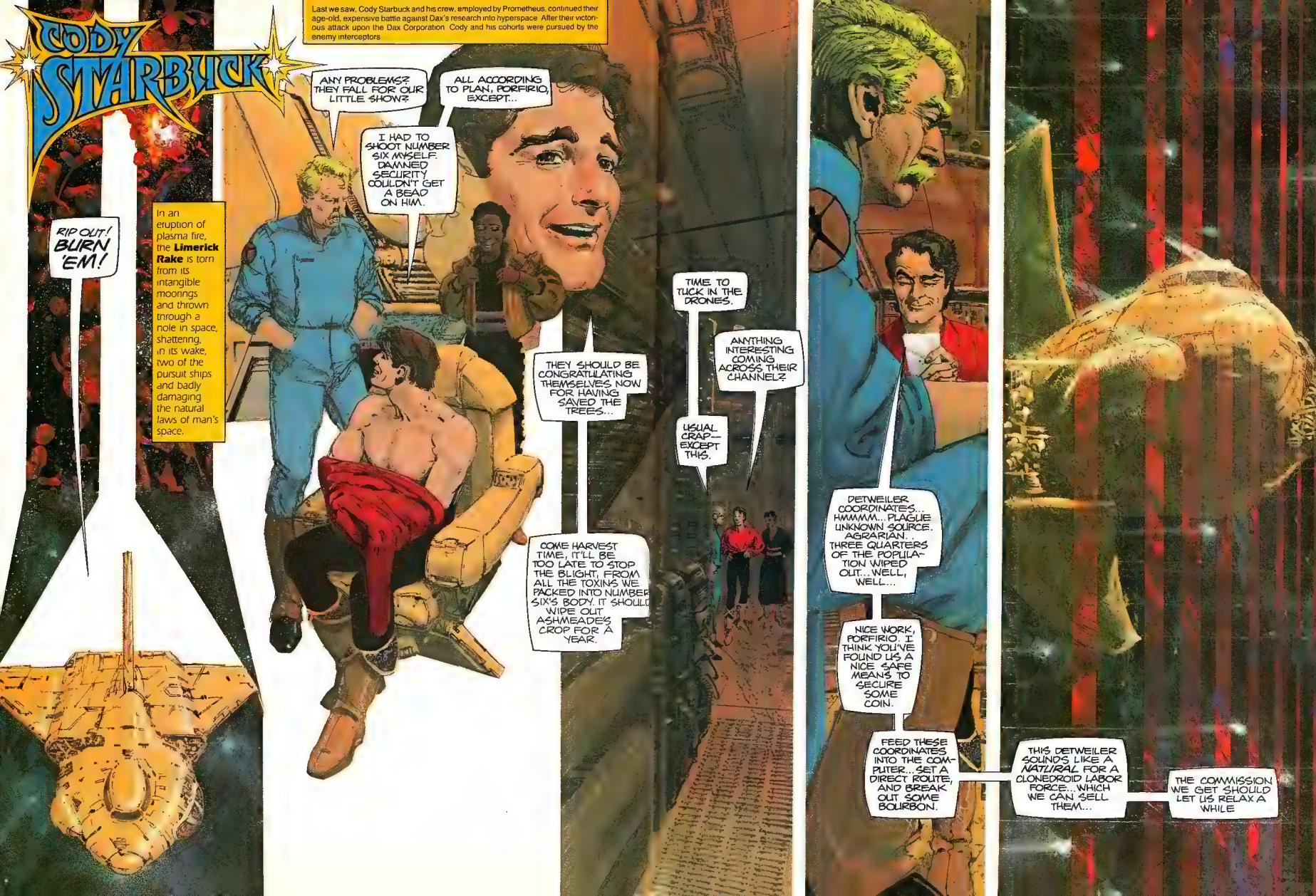

CODY STARBUCK
Last we saw, Cody Starbuck and his crew, employed by Prometheus, continued their age-old, expensive battle against Dax's research into hyperspace. After their victorious attack upon the Dax Corporation, Cody and his cohorts were pursued by the enemy interceptors
In an eruption of plasma fire, the **Limerick Rake** is torn from its intangible moorings and thrown through a hole in space, shattering, in its wake, two of the pursuit ships and badly damaging the natural laws of man's space.
RIP OUT! BURN 'EM!
ANY PROBLEMS? THEY FALL FOR OUR LITTLE SHOW?
ALL ACCORDING TO PLAN, PORFIRIO, EXCEPT...
I HAD TO SHOOT NUMBER SIX MYSELF. DAMNED SECURITY COULDN'T GET A BEAD ON HIM.
THEY SHOULD BE CONGRATULATING THEMSELVES NOW FOR HAVING SAVED THE TREES...
COME HARVEST TIME, IT'LL BE TOO LATE TO STOP THE BLIGHT, FROM ALL THE TOXINS WE PACKED INTO NUMBER SIX'S BODY. IT SHOULD WIPE OUT ASHMEADE'S CROP FOR A YEAR.
TIME TO TUCK IN THE DRONES.
ANYTHING INTERESTING COMING ACROSS THEIR CHANNELS?
USUAL CRAP— EXCEPT THIS.
DETWEILER COORDINATES... HMMM... PLAGUE UNKNOWN SOURCE. AGRARIAN. THREE QUARTERS OF THE POPULATION WIPED OUT... WELL, WELL...
NICE WORK, PORFIRIO. I THINK YOU'VE FOUND US A NICE SAFE MEANS TO SECURE SOME COIN.
FEED THESE COORDINATES INTO THE COMPUTER... SET A DIRECT ROUTE, AND BREAK OUT SOME BOURBON.
THIS DETWEILER SOUNDS LIKE A NATURAL FOR A CLONEDROID LABOR FORCE... WHICH WE CAN SELL THEM...
THE COMMISSION WE GET SHOULD LET US RELAX A WHILE

Securing orbit, the **Limerick Rake** opens a hatch at its underbelly.
CUT TRACTORS ON IGNITION.
IGNITE.
YOU SEEM PREOCCUPIED, CODY. WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?
JUST MAKING THIS SALE, PORFIRIO. I NEED TO RELAX. THIS SALE IS JUST WHAT WE *ALL* NEED.
FILL ME IN. WHAT'S THE GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE?
THERE *ISN'T* ANY GOVERNMENT LEFT, TO SPEAK OF. ONE OF THEIR SENATORS, A *LORD KALER*, OCCUPIES THE STATE HOUSE...
HE'S MORE OF A GO-BETWEEN FOR OUTWORLDERS THAN A LEADER. BUT HE'S THE MAN TO SEE.

Later
SO, AS YOU CAN SEE, SENATOR... OUR PROPOSAL IS A VERY PRACTICAL ONE...
...BUT WE HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING *WHOM* TO MAKE THE OFFER TO.
WELL, CAPTAIN... YOUR INFORMATION IS CORRECT. OUR POLITICAL SYSTEM COLLAPSED WITH THE PLAGUE.
I FUNCTION AS A LIAISON FOR THE TRUE POWER OF DETWEILER... LADY TESSA.
TESSA LIVES IN THE SOUTHERN DESERT. SHE ALONE CAN MAKE THE KIND OF DECISION THAT YOU SEEK.
THANK YOU DEARLY, SIR.
YOU'VE BEEN VERY HELPFUL, EXCELLENCY.
...FINE... MY STAFF WILL GIVE YOU THE NECESSARY CHARTS TO FIND THE LADY TESSA. BEWARE OF OUR RENEGADE TRIBESMEN. THEY ARE VICIOUS AND QUITE BLOODTHIRSTY.

Detweiler. A year has passed since the rain. The dying has stopped, but the grief remains.

She has survived a silent holocaust.

Her empty towns ring hollow with the tread of her anguished people.

Men and women, it would seem, are ripe for the healing arms of Mother Church, the **Imperium Catholicum**.

But, no. From their near-empty cathedrals, the priests and brothers watch in frustration as the flock turns its back on them—

turning instead to a new voice, a voice from the desert, a presence that offers the people of Detweiler some glimmer of hope through their despair. And the people listen.

WHAT DOES INFO HAVE?

VERY LITTLE, CODY. NO FLEET OF THEIR OWN... THEY LEASE FROM NEIGHBORS FOR SHIPPING PURPOSES.

FURTHER, THE CHURCH SEEMS TO HAVE SOME COMPETITION FROM SOME NEW THEOCRATS. NOT MUCH ON THEM, THOUGH.

SHOULD I RETURN THEIR FIRE?
OH, COME ON, THOSE BOYS ARE USING FLINTLOCKS. LET 'EM HAVE SOME HARMLESS SPORT.
THERE IT IS. DOESN'T LOOK LIKE MUCH, DOES IT?
FRANKLY, NEITHER DO WE. SET HER DOWN JUST OUTSIDE OF THE PERIMETER
RECEPTION COMMITTEE SEEMS PEACEFUL ENOUGH...
REMEMBER, NO STRONG ARM. I'LL DO THE TALKING.
WELCOME, STRANGER. I AM SEÑOR STAVROS KELT.
CAPTAIN CODY STARBUCK... THIS IS PORFIRIO KLINE...OUR CREDENTIALS.
AH...PROMETHEUS ENTERPRISES. HMM... AND OF COURSE YOU WISH TO SEE TESSA... SHE IS IN HER CABIN. IF YOU WILL FOLLOW ME...
TELL ME, SEÑOR KELT... WHAT SORT OF A WOMAN IS SHE?
TESSA IS...WELL, SHE SPEAKS, WE LISTEN. HER VOICE HEALS. WITHOUT HER, DETWEILER WOULD HAVE DIED.

YOUR GRACE, I BRING YOU OUTSIDERS, ON A MISSION OF TRADE...
MAY I PRESENT CAPTAIN CODY STARBUCK AND HIS MAN, PORFIRIO KLINE.
:P...:
YOU...MURDERER... GHOUL!
YOU!...HAVE THE NERVE TO PRESENT YOURSELF!
THESE TWO ARE TO BE IMPRISONED, TRIED, AND EXECUTED!

Her face first pales, then flushes a violent crimson. She sputters—her words catch in her throat . . . until finally . . .

a moment of frozen silence then

TO BE CONTINUED

Rivyu-ed

Trust, Elvis Costello

I'm talking about heroes (category rock), and I'm talking about now, so I'm talking about Elvis Costello for one. Elvis in the 1980s, the angry man's Elvis, a sublimely gutsy Elvis. The vicious street stalker of his pre-*Imperial Bedroom* days now turns toward worldweariness and romantic grumble on *Trust* (his latest disc) and in concert (at the NYC Palladium show). But there's no loss of life here. Costello simply sets aside blood-and-spittle posturing for lilting musicality and face-the-music, life-can-be-handled sentiment. That means a lot more solid pop—listenable, elevating, all that—and less life live. Though it's not the ideal exchange, this Elvis's proto-hip angry heroics still inform his style of attack. But so long Little Hitler, hello Meester Mordant Auteur. While he leaves it to critics to analyze the raison d'etre, both live show and these sixteen cuts, Elvis covers the iron fist with a grim lover's velvet glove.

—Brad Balfour

New Musics

Lotsa recent press yapping about a so-called psychedelic revival. Yawn. Once again small minds force-fit past terminologies into unaccommodating present definitions. Pity the Psychedelic Furs—neither sixties revivalists nor particularly hirsute—who found themselves instantly torpedoed by geriatric geeks for failing at something they never attempted. "People just don't understand irony," said Devo's Mark Mothersbaugh; especially if you toy with the holy meat of history.

Transcendence of form, sonic adventurism, and awe-fed innocence characterized the psychedelic sound—and precious little of this can be found in stuff tagged with the label today. Take Liverpudlians Echo and the Bunnymen and The Teardrop Explodes, both hung with the neopsychedelic albatross by virtue of loony names and atmospherically interesting early singles. Teardrop's debut LP, *Kilimanjaro* (Mercury), reveals overt lust for mainstream success and disappointingly little of the hypnotic ethereality of their first single, 1979's "Sleeping Gas." And just listen to the recut album version: a pair of obtrusive, mood-trivializing, tinny trumpets completely destroys the original's trancelike subtlety. Structural conservatism and singer-lyricist Julian Cope's disingenuous naivete further bely any claims to psychedelia. Ditto the Bunnymen, whose preoccupations in no way merit the inane Doors comparison they've repeatedly attracted. (While singer Ian McCulloch does conjure up Morrison resonances, the band more closely resembles the Seeds—check out their "Do It Clean.") But the value of *Crocodiles* (Sire) lies not in an adolescent nostalgia reflex but in the passionate evocation of an angered, disillusioned romanticism. Definitely a post-seventies sensibility; not at all a psychedelic touchstone.

Ireland's U2 moves in a transcendental direction, but a paucity of real ambition undercuts the success of their debut *Boy* (Island). An authentically adventurous player in his use of harmonics and sense of melody, guitarist The Edge (the guy's name, I swear) emerges as the band's lone point of interest. Narrowness of vision makes *Boy* merely good while Colin Newman's sonic omnivorousness makes his solo debut disc, *A-Z* (import Beggars Banquet), extraordinary. Building on Syd Barrett–era Pink Floyd and *Tiger Mountain*–era Eno, Wire alumnus Newman constructs superior modern psychedelia from a well-crafted architectonic arrangement of texture and melody.

If the spirit of '67 lives on—not through necrophilia, exhumation, or cloning but with transplantation and lots of healthy procreation—then it resides in the Urban Verbs' second, *Early Damage* (Warner Bros.). The most successful marriage to date of a state-of-the-art, eighties technological sensibility with the true psychedelic essence, it effortlessly treads the fine line between experimentalism and accessibility without missing a step. *Early Damage* is a psychedelic album; the Verbs are *not* a "psychedelic band." The end desecrates the means.

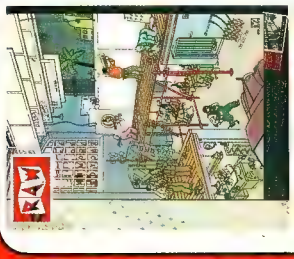
— Lou Stathis

Raw #2, edited by Art Spiegelman and Françoise Mouly

Raw Books, 27 Greene Street, New York City 10013

Not counting the rag currently smudging your greasy fingers, *Raw* is the only American graphic magazine with guts, balls, and vision. *Raw* is to *HM* what *HM* is to that puerile uebermensch tripe printed on recycled Charmin that used to cost a dime. *Raw*, however, is well worth the bucks (four, by hand; five, by post). Good heavy paper (not so glossy that it blinds you), large format, and—almost forgot—more twisted brilliance per page than anything this side of *Soldier of Fortune*. The book's two outstanding inserts: Mark Beyer's "City of Terror" bubblegum cards (urban paranoia a la *Mars Attacks!* with real pink-cardboard gum!), and the first chapter of editor Spiegelman's magnum rodent opus, "Maus." As the desperate, hilarious intersection of art, underground comics, and the insane mind, *Raw* welcomes the Reagan years.

—Lou Stathis



Cities of the Red Night, by William S. Burroughs

Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1981, $14.95

Photos by William Coupon

Time warps fast when you're having fun in these crimson cities. William S. Burroughs can't help it, like the rest of his citizens who populate his latest, most linear novel, *Cities of the Red Night*. It's life in a fever dream: the swelling and the shrinking of settings and time, where the strange is normalcy, as the mondo bizarro radiates an orgasmic glow. Against our will, we join the addict crew here; they sail across interconnected yet wildly diverse landscapes of time and space and we read on. A comparison: Graham Greene's final opium dream? No, that isn't fair to either great writer. But indeed, in the words of Hassan i Sabbah, "Nothing is true. Everything is permitted." These are Burroughs's watchwords, and the eternal guidelines of this intriguing novel. Knock 'em dead, you ol' hashish assassin.

—Elliot Murphy

George Romero's *Knightriders*

To re-dress ancient myth in modern clothes is a simple task; it's merely a matter of draping the former with a modern cloak. But to really toy with the myth, to somehow evolve from it something new, is considerably more difficult. That task director George Romero takes upon himself in the creation of *Knightriders*—a variation of the King Arthur tale seen in a contemporary light. Romero casts his characters as a crew of Renaissance fair-givers with a twist—not only do they hold the month-long medieval-like extravaganza country-wide, but they joust on motorcycles as well. Within this framework, Romero portrays Arthur as a fatally flawed fellow, while the Black Knight is not such a bad guy. And Lancelot is no more a hero than the next beautiful but dumb blond boy. Romero's horrific tendencies, displayed in the most pungent terms in *Night of the Living Dead* and *Dawn of the Dead*, are clearly underplayed here. But he still awakens enough sense of apprehension to keep the film moving and the story more than a 1980s frolic around the Round Table.

—Brad Balfour

Transformations Devoutly to Be Wished

Pinocchio (1940): In what is probably the scariest, most primal transformation scene ever, Pinocchio's delinquent pal Lampwick is punished for the evils of poolroom hooky playing, cigar smoking, and candy bingeing by undergoing a protracted torturous transformation into a donkey. The movie itself remains Disney's apogee, no strings attached.

Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (1922): John Barrymore's wild-eyed evolution into literature's most demented schizo, accomplished virtually without makeup or camera tricks, is the most unforgettably physical in the genre. Later variations included *Dr. Jekyll and Sister Hyde* (1972), in which actor Ralph Bates turns into actress Martine Beswick (a neat trick that we never got to see on U.S. screens, courtesy of the MPAA), and *The Two Faces of Dr. Jekyll* (1961), remembered as the film in which Jekyll became Hyde by turning his back and—quick!—pulling his beard off.

Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (1932): Rouben Mamoulian's brilliant use of sounds recorded backward and lighting changes to reveal already applied makeup set a standard for sheer ingenuity that, like the film itself, is hard to surpass even today. Fredric March's unrestrained, toothsome portrayal of a more simian Hyde than most seems almost contemporary in its sadistic hysteria.

The Wolf Man (1941–1948): The harried, guilt-ridden countenance of Lon Chaney, Jr., was seen in a limited transformation only at the end of the original Universal picture. It wasn't until the sequel, *Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man* (and the best-directed film of the 1940s series by the underappreciated Roy William Neill), that makeup artist Jack Pierce was able to fully lap-dissolve all that yak hair from human to werewolf—a resonant image that has haunted the dreams of generations of moviegoers and "Shock Theater" fans.

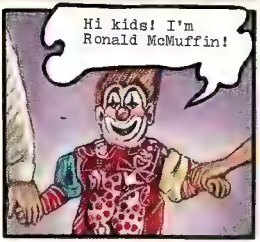
Honorable Mention: *The Bed-sitting-room* (1969), in which Ralph Richardson is atomically mutated into a bed-sitting-room entirely without the aid of special effects or opticals of any kind. Radiation can do that.

—Joe Dante
(director of *Piranha* and *The Howling*)

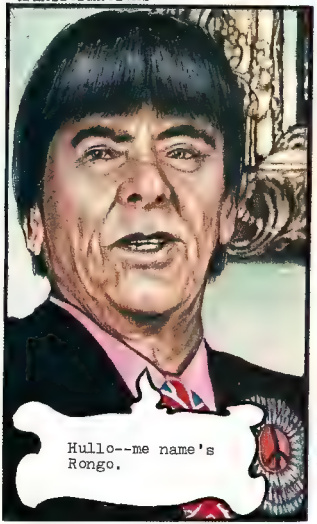
Dante himself has a few transformations happening in his latest film, *The Howling*. Witness the hairy scene above.

Deep inside the bowels of the White House, Dr. Guhlman and I tinkered with the tiny piece of mechanical brain which had come loose in the president's head.
CK
PER

We were caught in a frantic race against time--to adjust his personality before his first major press conference.



The slightest alteration in his circuitry produced startling transformations--

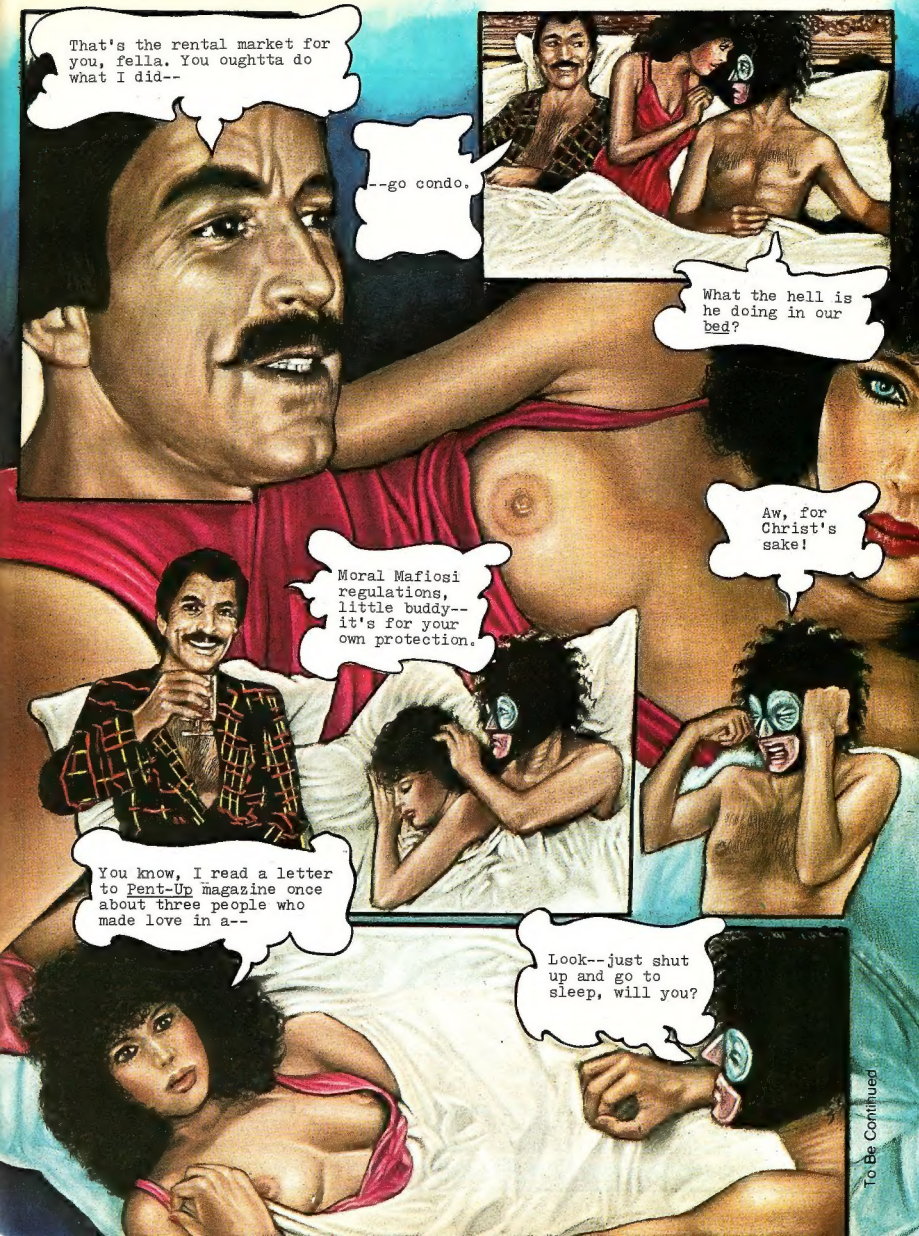


Finally, we found a mode approved by our masters at the Moral Mafiosi--

All things considered, the press conference went well--wasteful agencies such as the State and Justice departments were eliminated--

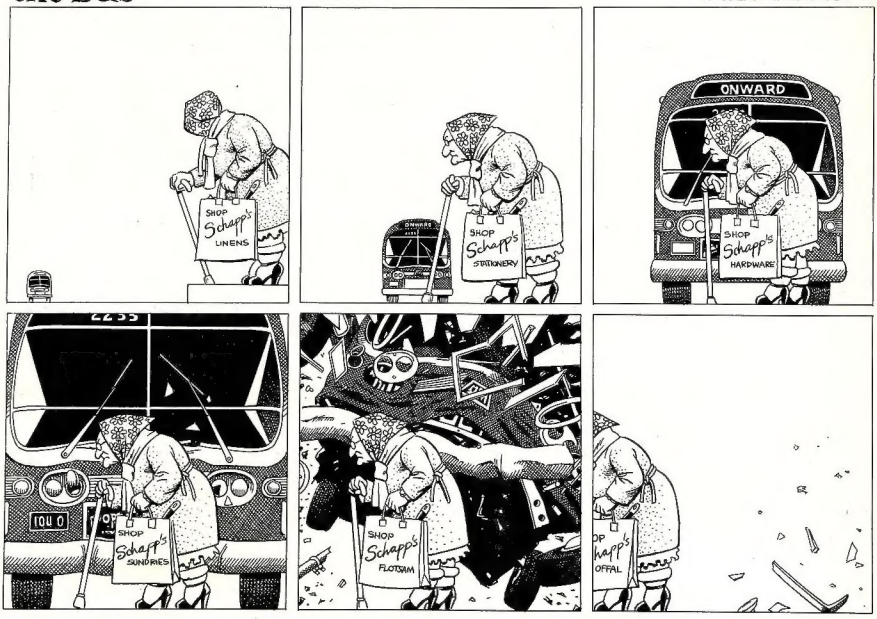
Oh--he's your Secret Service agent.

You know--the family we're sub-letting from.
Hey, pal--mind if I turn on the TV?
You want me to keep my clothes on for this picture, Howie?
Isn't it great to finally have a place of our own?
Beat it, meester!
Yeah...except now I've got to go and pee.
Yeah, go away!
YEOWWW!
What's the matter now?
One of the Rodriguez kids bit me, and then they locked--


That's the rental market for you, fella. You oughtta do what I did--
--go condo.
What the hell is he doing in our bed?
Aw, for Christ's sake!
Moral Mafiosi regulations, little buddy--it's for your own protection.
You know, I read a letter to Pent-Up magazine once about three people who made love in a--
Look--just shut up and go to sleep, will you?
To Be Continued

the bus

PAUL KIRCHNER ©



NEXT MONTH

What you saw of **Outland** in this issue was just a taste of what Steranko has in store for you. Come July, *HM* will begin a 44-page illustrated serialization of this new science-fiction thriller. We think it's a bit like *High Noon* in space. See what you think!

Also, the return of two long-lost buddies of ours: Druillet and Picotto's **Firaz**, and Thomas's **Elvis**. Guys! We hardly knew ye!

Corben's **Bloodstar** ends, but his interview with Brad Balfour continues.

Plus: Bilal's **The Immortals' Fete** and Findley's **Tex Arcana**.

What a sensational way to start the summer!

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Our first film since Animal House

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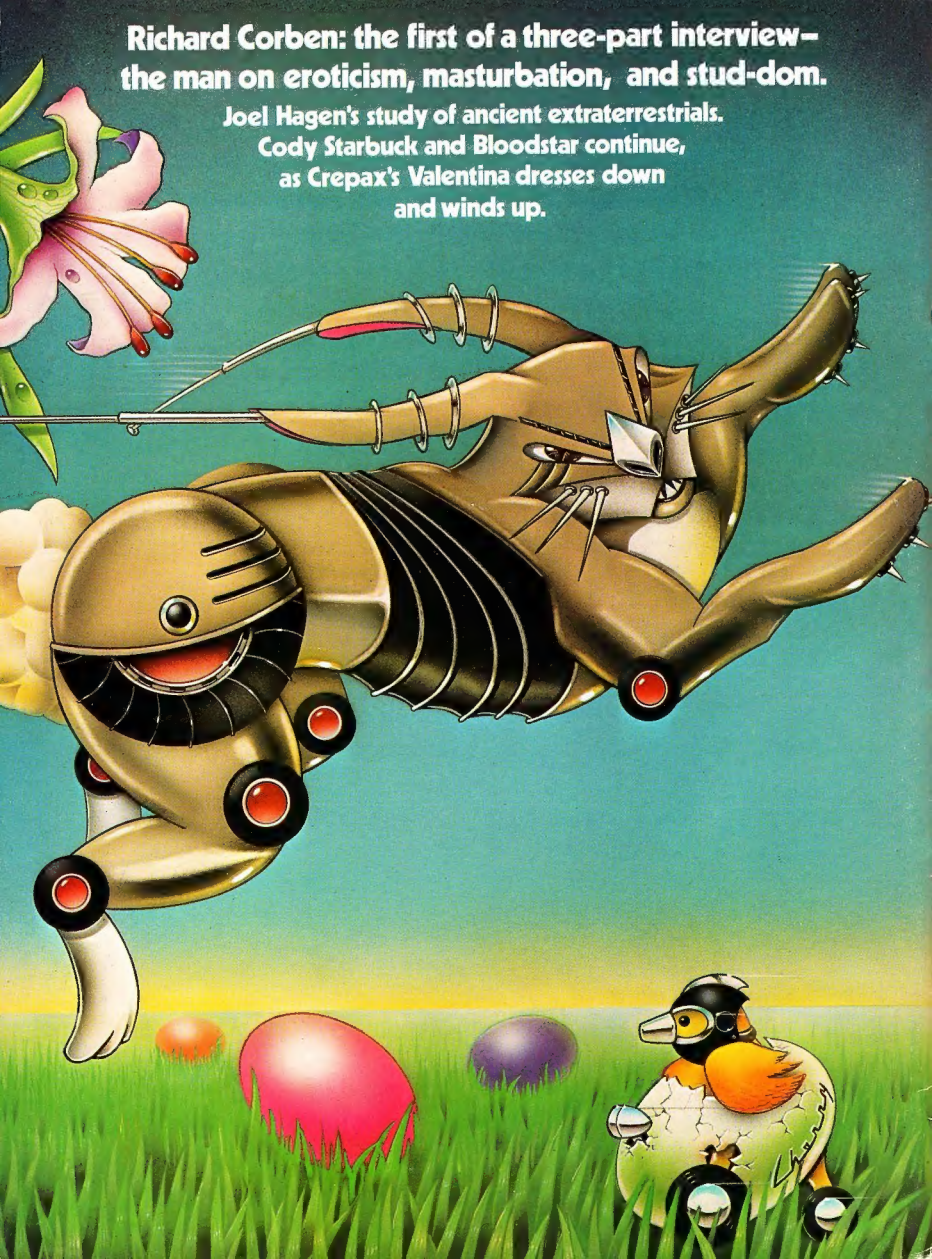
Richard Corben: the first of a three-part interview–
the man on eroticism, masturbation, and stud-dom.
Joel Hagen's study of ancient extraterrestrials.
Cody Starbuck and Bloodstar continue,
as Crepax's Valentina dresses down
and winds up.